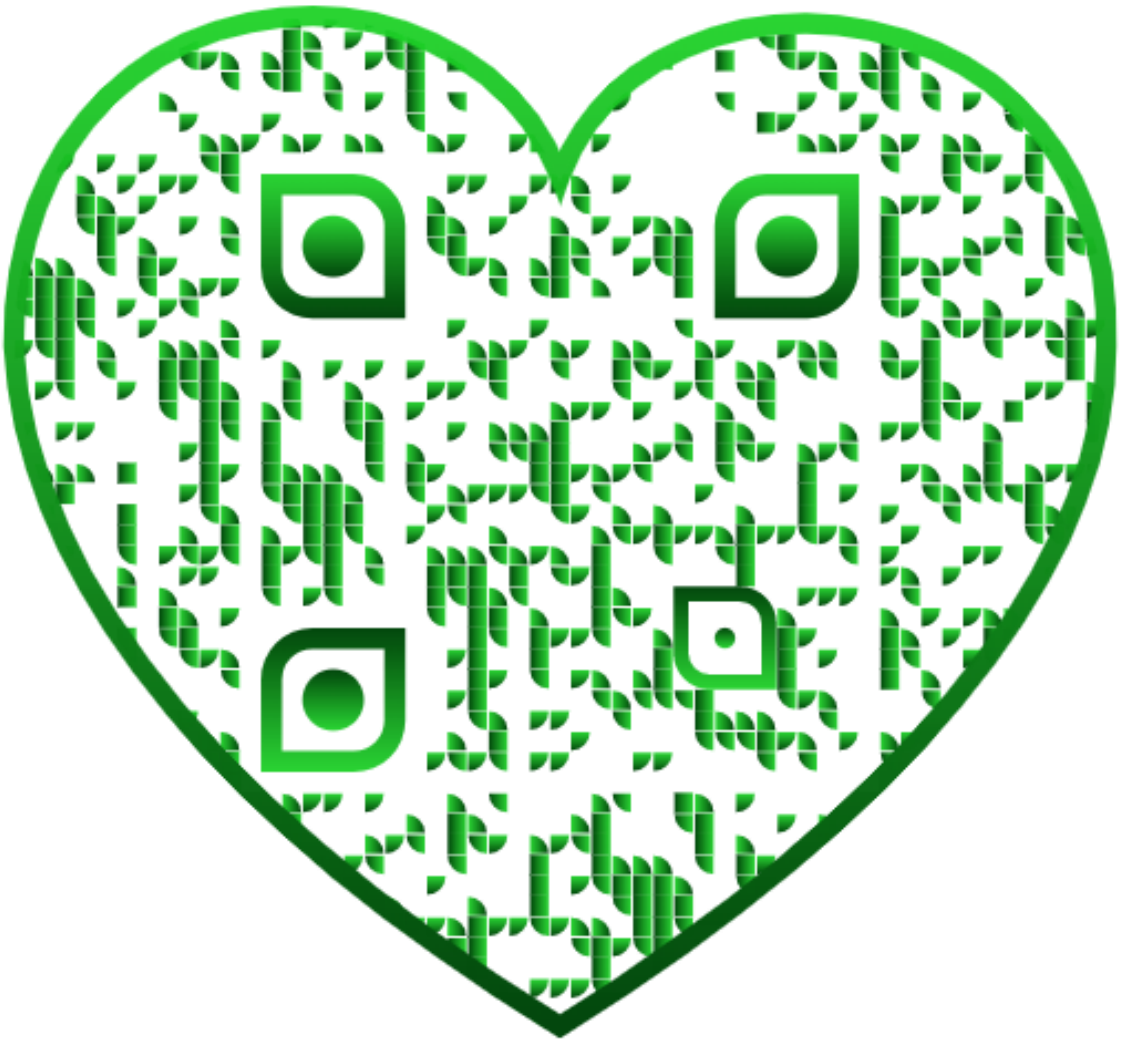
SPIRIT POSSESSION
AROUND THE WORLD

POSSESSION, COMMUNION, AND DEMON EXPULSION ACROSS CULTURES

Joseph Laycock, Editor



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Possession, Communion, and Demon Expulsion across Cultures

JOSEPH P. LAYCOCK, EDITOR

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Preface

Spirit Possession around the World: Possession, Communion, and Demon Expulsion across Cultures is a compendium of beliefs and practices related to humankind's interaction with spirit entities. Virtually all cultures have some tradition of spirit entities, and most believe in some form of spirit possession. Spirit entities are usually understood to be invisible and intangible under normal circumstances; however, they can make themselves known through the influence they exert on the world, especially on people. Entities responsible for possession include gods, demons, ghosts, ancestors, and animal spirits. Some cultures even report possession by the spirits of people from foreign cultures. For example, among the *zar* cults of Northern Africa, it was common for women to become possessed by the spirits of white colonists or Arab merchants. In contemporary Western culture, the new traditions of channeling and UFOlogy have introduced models of possession by beings from other dimensions and other planets, respectively.

Spirit possession often takes the form of an altered state of consciousness in which the possessed person manifests an alternate personality. Psychological literature sometimes refers to this state as a "dissociative trance." However, "trance possession" is only one specific type of spirit possession. A wide range of physical symptoms and behaviors have been attributed to possession. For example, the Gospels describe some individuals as "possessed" because they are blind and mute (Matthew 12:22) or crippled (Luke 13:10–13). Similarly, many cultures attribute mundane illnesses or misfortune to the presence of malevolent ghosts. For this reason, anthropologist Erika Bourguignon concludes that when we look across cultures, spirit possession should be understood first and foremost as a method of interpretation. That is, spirit possession is not a particular set of symptoms but a diagnostic model through which a culture interprets certain phenomena.

Attitudes toward spirit possession vary widely across cultures. For figures such as shamans, mediums, and oracles, possession is a desirable and sought

after state. As vessels for benevolent gods and spirits, these figures are believed to be able to heal people, deliver prophecies, or cast out malevolent spirits. In other contexts, spirit possession is unwelcome. Many cultures have traditions of malevolent entities such as demons, the *dybbuk* of Jewish tradition, and the *jinn* of Islamic tradition who possess unwilling victims. These nonconsensual possessions are at best a nuisance and at worst life-threatening. In some cultures, involuntary possession may be a first step toward becoming a shaman or medium and developing a more egalitarian relationship with spirit entities.

Cultures with a tradition of unwanted spirit possession also have techniques for removing such spirits, which can be described as exorcism. The word "exorcism" is derived from the Greek word *exorkizein*, meaning "to bind by oath." In this sense, the term does not imply banishing so much as asserting control over spirits. There are countless methods of exorcism, ranging from folk remedies to elaborate rituals prescribed by theologians and other experts. In many cultures, exorcists have served a social role similar to doctors or psychotherapists, curing people by driving out unwanted spirits and demons. Historian Moshe Sluhovsky suggests that in medieval Europe exorcism was primarily a means of curing the body and that it was only in the early modern period that possession came to be understood as a disease of the soul. In addition to removing spirits from people's bodies and souls, exorcisms are also used to remove unwanted spirits from places and things. For this reason, several famous "hauntings" and incidents where religious authorities have battled spirits for control of homes and other spaces are also included here.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive survey of all the world's traditions of spirit possession and exorcism. From 1963 to 1968, Bourguignon directed "The Cross-cultural Study of Dissociational States" with support from the National Institute for Mental Health. The study examined ethnographies of 488 cultures around the world and found that some form of spirit possession occurred in 77 percent of them. In other words, a five-year study examining contemporary cultures uncovered roughly 375 different traditions of spirit possession. This number would grow exponentially if one were to look at the thousands of cultures not included in Bourguignon's study, and then again if one considered the development of these cultures across thousands of years of recorded history. In sum, the number of potential entries that could be included in this encyclopedia borders on the infinite.

With this problem in mind, the topics presented here are intended to serve as a primer for further research by demonstrating the range of beliefs and practices related to possession and exorcism as well as the theories scholars have used to interpret these beliefs and practices. Many of the classical cases of exorcism from early modern Europe are included. So too are traditions from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. There also entries for countries and regions that have particularly robust traditions of spirit possession. In many of these regions, such as Vietnam or Pakistan, multiple religious traditions coexist and equally inform local forms of possession and exorcism. In addition to representing varied regions and cultural traditions, entries have also been chosen to explore the range of historical time. Examples have been taken from ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Chinese, and Indian sources. However, there are also many modern examples, drawn from 20th and even 21st-century cases. These modern examples have been privileged in part to combat the assumption (widely held in contemporary Western culture) that exorcism is a relic of the Middle Ages, doomed to be eliminated by medical science. There is little evidence to support this narrative as reports of spirit possession and exorcisms have not declined and may even be on the rise. Even in a digital age, humankind's relationship with spirit entities is as active as ever.

In addition to entries this volume also features an assortment of primary documents related to possession and exorcism. The entries include examples from Indian, Egyptian, Semitic, Chinese, Greek, Tibetan, Jewish, Islamic, French, Native American, and Mongolian traditions and span from the second millennium BCE to the present. Many of these documents are original translations and some are being published in English for the first time. Also included among the primary documents are previously unpublished sources such as Ágnes Birtalan's transcription of an invocation used by a Mongolian shamaness as well as a Cree Indian account of a *windigo* from the archives of L'Université Laval in Quebec, Canada. Together, these sources allow the reader to explore the diversity of beliefs and practices concerning spirit possession and exorcism across cultures, continents, and ages.

Introduction

In 1871, the anthropologist E. B. Tylor published *Primitive Culture*, which introduced his concept of “animism” to the study of religion. From the Latin “animus,” meaning “soul” or “life,” animism refers to the belief in human souls as well as other spirits that may reside in animals, places, natural phenomena, or inanimate objects. Although they are invisible and intangible, nonhuman spirits are believed to be sentient and therefore can be interacted with as if they were people. From an animistic perspective, spirits can be negotiated with, appeased, or even commanded by someone with unique abilities or who knows the proper procedures. Tylor theorized that all cultures develop along a predetermined path and that animism—which can be found in some form in virtually every culture on Earth—constitutes the most basic and primitive form of religion. Tylor’s ideas were based on artifacts and stories brought back by European colonizers. Although he regarded beliefs such as animism as “childish,” he did not assume the people who held these beliefs were naturally less intelligent than his British colleagues. Instead, he regarded animists as “primitive philosophers” who arrived at their ideas about spirits though empirical observation and reasonable (but ultimately flawed) deduction. While asleep, humans lose consciousness. When they awaken, they can describe dreams in which they had different bodies and travelled to other places. It would be natural for the primitive philosopher to conclude that some intangible and sentient entity (a soul) lives inside a waking, conscious person and leaves during sleep to wander on its own. At death, the soul leaves the body permanently to reside somewhere else. Animals must likewise have some sort of spirit as they too experience sleep and death. From here, it is easy to imagine other orders of spirits residing in inanimate objects or having no physical vessel whatsoever.

Tylor was also interested in the subject of possession by spirits. Although not all cultures have a tradition of spirit possession, the majority do. While different cultures have very different conceptions of what happens during possession, all models of spirit possession build upon the idea that a human

being is not a unified entity but rather an assemblage of components such as a body, mind, soul, spirit, personality, and so on. During possession some of these parts are exchanged, and different spirits, souls, or personalities take up residence in the body of the possessed. In Polynesia mediums were described as “god-boxes” because they were understood to be containers into which various deities could ensconce themselves.

While spirit possession is regarded as something extraordinary by contemporary Western culture, in many cultures it is a relatively ordinary part of life. Exorcisms were often done to solve mundane problems such as illness or misfortune that were attributed to the presence of malevolent spirits. Possessions in which the person’s normal personality appears absent and impaired, sometimes known as “trance possessions,” are more rare. In such a state the person may engage in seemingly erratic behavior or even manifest an alternate personality. However, even this sort of possession is a normal part of many religious services. Shamans, oracles, and mediums are expected to enter a state of trance so that gods and spirits are able to provide prophecies, healing, and other services.

The anthropologist Erika Bourguignon wrote of “positive” and “negative” forms of possession to distinguish the experience of someone possessed by a demon from that of an oracle serving as a mouthpiece for a benevolent deity. I. M. Lewis amended this distinction to speak of “controlled” and “uncontrolled” or “solicited” and “unsolicited” forms of spirit possession. The primary criteria between a positive and a negative experience of possession are whether the possession is desired and whether it occurs in a ritualized context where it does not interfere with daily life. What makes demonic possession so horrible is that, much like an illness, there is no way to control when the evil spirit will manifest or depart. In many cultures, an experience of involuntary possession may be a sign that the person is a shaman or medium. With time and training, they are able to control when the state of possession occurs, making the spirits a resource for the community rather than a nuisance.

In cases of voluntary possession, practitioners will use a number of techniques to invoke the spirits or gods to “fill” or “mount” them, resulting in a state of religious ecstasy. Anthropologists refer to these techniques as “induction strategies.” They may include prolonged periods of prayer, fasting, or the consumption of hallucinogens. However, the most widely used induction strategy is music and dancing. In some religions, such as Haitian

Vodou, it is expected that many of the congregants will become possessed during ceremonies that involve singing and dancing. Certain ecstatic forms of Christianity, notably Pentecostalism, may also be studied as forms of voluntary possession. During church services Pentecostals become filled with the Holy Spirit, which can manifest as an altered state of consciousness, speaking in tongues, and other extraordinary abilities.

Tylor believed that as cultures developed their knowledge and passed it on through education, they would inevitably arrive at a more sophisticated and rational understanding of the world. As such, he suggested that animism and spirit possession are relics of the primitive past and while they may survive in remote parts of the world, they are doomed to be replaced by scientific rationalism. While many in the West still believe this narrative in which science will inevitably replace belief in the supernatural, there is little evidence to support this idea—at least as far as spirit possession is concerned. In his heart, Tylor probably knew this, for he himself attended Spiritualist séances to observe mediums channeling spirits of the dead. The mediums Tylor studied were not "primitives" but educated Victorians. Their culture's knowledge of science and medicine did not preclude the practice of mediumship.

At the dawn of the 21st century, humanity continues to interact with spirit entities. On March 11, 2011, a tsunami devastated Japan, killing nearly twenty thousand people. In the months that followed, many Japanese living in the vicinity of the disaster reported ghostly encounters with the spirits of those who had drowned. Some experienced possession by people and even animals that had died in the disaster. Japan's clergy, including Christian, Buddhist, and Shinto priests, were all asked to help quell the unhappy spirits. One Buddhist priest exorcised 25 different spirits who had apparently taken up residence in a young girl. Each spirit had a distinct personality and described its life before agreeing to leave the girl.

Also in 2011, 250 workers at the Anful Garments Factory in Cambodia collapsed in a collective spell of fainting, shutting down the production line. Two days later a factory worker entered a state of possession, claiming to be an angry ancestral spirit and demanding sacrifices of raw chicken. The factory was only able to resume normal operations after the owners staged an elaborate ritual, offering the spirit generous amounts of food, cigarettes, and Coca-Cola. Similar incidents have been reported in factories in Malaysia and other parts of South Asia.

In June 2013, a primary school in the Philippines was forced to suspend classes after 20 students inexplicably began screaming, fainting, and convulsing. Many interpreted the behavior as demonic possession. Priests were summoned, and blessings and exorcisms were performed. One theory was that the children had conducted a séance, offering an invitation to demonic spirits. Another was that some balete trees that had recently been felled near the school had been a home for spirits, who were acting out their vengeance by possessing the children.

In Portal, Georgia, Tim and Katie Mather run a ministry offering to perform exorcisms on American soldiers suffering from PTSD. The Mathers claim that trauma creates a window for demons to enter and that these demons are the actual cause of PTSD symptoms. Soldiers seeking to cure their PTSD can attend a 3-day retreat during which they receive a demon-fighting workbook and a 30-minute exorcism. One soldier's experience is profiled in *Demon Camp* by journalist Jennifer Percy.

Rather than displacing supernatural beliefs, modern technology has allowed ideas about spirit possession to spread across the globe at an even faster rate. This is evidenced by a recent glut of films about exorcism—many of them purporting to be based on actual events. In 2010, a rabbi in Israel used the teleconferencing service Skype to perform an exorcism on a man in Brazil. In 2014, evangelical exorcist Bob Larson performed a Skype exorcism on a man in Norway that was televised on CNN. These cases show that possession and exorcism are not "survivals" of humanity's primitive past but frameworks by which modern cultures continue to make sense of the world and search for meaning.

Psychology has provided new ways of interpreting the types of behavior commonly associated with possession. What some regard as certain signs of possession, skeptics may interpret as suggestion, hysteria, an undiagnosed mental illness, or simple faking. Dedicated skeptics have found natural explanations for the most extraordinary phenomena associated with possession, such as apparent levitation, regurgitating nails and other unusual substances, or speaking in languages not known to the possessed. However, whether or not one believes in the reality of spirit possession, the effects of these beliefs are social realities. In the cases described above, clergy were really summoned, factories and schools were really shut down, "demon camps" were really attended, and television ratings and producers' salaries were really affected. In other contexts, rulers have been appointed and wars

declared or prevented because of prophecies given by oracles in a state of possession. This means that the study of possession and exorcism is relevant to the fields of anthropology and sociology as well as those of psychology, cognitive science, theology, and religious studies. Accordingly, those who continue to dismiss beliefs and practices about spirit entities as a medieval superstition may find the world they live in increasingly difficult to understand.

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Chronology

1600–1050 BCE	Approximate date for the Shang Dynasty in China. Oracle bones from this period indicate belief that certain illnesses are caused by the spirits of ancestors, restless ghosts, or demons.
1500–1000 BCE	Approximate dates for the composition of the oldest Vedic texts. Originally passed down orally by Brahman priests, these texts contain exorcisms along with other spells, hymns, prayers, and formulas.
1079–1007 BCE	Probable dates for the life of Saul, the first king of the Israel. The story of Saul, as recorded in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, describes him as troubled by evil spirits sent by God.
800–400 BCE	The Oracle of Delphi reaches the height of its political influence in Ancient Greece. After this, the oracle enters a long decline and is finally closed by emperor Theodosius I in 395 CE.
250–175 BCE	Probable dates for composition of the Book of Tobit. The text describes Tobias, who exorcises the demon Asmodeus with the help of the angel Raphael.
Mid-700s to 100 BCE	Probable dates for the composition of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.
400–300 BCE	Probable date for the composition of the Bentresh Stela, which describes an exorcism under the reign of pharaoh Ramsses II.
65–100 CE	Probable dates for the composition of the four canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and

	John) which describe Jesus casting out demons.
357 CE	Athanasius of Alexandria compiles the *Life of Anthony*. This text describes Saint Anthony's spiritual struggles against demons and has a lasting influence on how Christians imagine demonic forces.
645 CE	The Japanese government outlaws spirit mediumship in an attempt to consolidate control. The laws were strengthened in 718 CE, temporarily forcing Japan's traditional female mediums, known as *miko*, into exile.
653–656 CE	The Qur'an beomes a formal written canon compiled from the oral prophecies delivered by Muhammad. The Qur'an contains references to *jinn*, spirits who can possess humans and animals. The *jinn* were already part of Arab folklore before the rise of Islam.
700–800 CE	Buddhism arrives in Tibet. According to legend, Buddhism was spread by the Tantric exorcist Padmasambhava, who subjugated the local spirits of Tibet and converted them into guardians of Buddhism.
700–900 CE	A number of Tantric texts, such as the *Netra Tantra*, are composed in India that describe hierarchies of possessing spirits.
1050–1150 CE	Life of Machik Labdron, a Tibetan female Tantric Buddhist practitioner. Labdron is credited with creating and spreading "chod," a tantric ritual used to exorcise demons and attain enlightenment.
1374	The first major outbreak of "dancing mania" occurs in Aachen, Germany. Numerous people report uncontrollable dancing lasting for days. A subsequent outbreak occurs in Strasbourg in 1518 involving 400 people, some of whom reportedly die of exhaustion.

1500 to mid-1800s	The Atlantic Slave Trade. Some 12 million enslaved persons are brought from Africa to North and South America. Enslaved Africans bring their religious traditions with them, which are changed by the conditions of slavery and contact with European and Native American cultures. This migration gives rise to Afro-Atlantic religions, including Vodou, Santería, Candomblé, and Umbanda.
1600–1700	Historian Brian Levack describes the 17th century as "golden age of the demoniac" in Europe and its colonies. There are numerous reports of possessions, and church authorities devise new rituals and procedures for addressing possession. Discourse about possession is fueled by the Protestant Reformation, begun in 1517, which creates numerous competing churches. Exorcisms become opportunities for clergy to publicly demonstrate the power of their church. At the same time, exorcisms can become a liability if they caused a church to appear superstitious. European Jews are also affected by this trend, and possessions are reported in Jewish communities. The term *dybbuk*, a possessing spirit in Jewish folklore, appears for the first time in a Yiddish pamphlet published in Volhynia Ukraine in the late 1600s.
1604	The Anglican Church enacts a new canon banning ministers from performing exorcisms through the means of prayer and fasting. This is done in response exorcists such as John Darrel whose actions had become an embarrassment for the Church.
1614	The *Rituale Romanum* is promulgated, establishing an official Catholic rite of

	exorcism.
1627–1630	The French village of Mattaincourt becomes the center of the largest known witch panic in Catholic Europe. As many as 85 people are allegedly possessed or otherwise afflicted by witchcraft. Numerous priests arrive from nearby parishes to perform exorcisms.
1634	A case of mass demonic possession occurs at an Ursuline convent in Loudun, France. Other famous cases of “possessed convents” occur at Aix-en-Province in 1611 and Louviers in 1647.
1638	Dorothy Talbye of Salem, Massachusetts, is tried for murder after breaking her three-year-old daughter’s neck. Although her behavior is interpreted as demonic possession, she is found guilty and becomes the first woman to be executed in Massachusetts.
1652	George Fox experiences a vision of a multitude of people dressed in white clothing coming to Jesus Christ. This event prompts Fox to establish a new religious community, which comes to be known as The Quakers. Early Quakers practice an ecstatic form of worship, and Fox performs exorcisms.
1692–1693	The Salem Witch Trials. Several girls experience fits that are attributed to bewitchment. During the witch trials that ensued, 20 people are killed.
1700–1760	The life of rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, also known as Ba’al Shem Tov. Rabbi Eliezer was the founder of Hasidic Judaism as well as an exorcist.
1848	The Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, claim to be able to communicate with ghosts who respond to their questions through a series of raps. The sisters demonstrate their

	abilities as mediums to audiences throughout New York. This event is widely regarded as the beginning of the Spiritualist movement.
1850–1861	Andrew Jackson Davis publishes his six-volume series *The Great Harmonia: Being a Philosophical Revelation of the Natural, Spiritual and Celestial Universe*. This work becomes the underlying cosmology and theology of Spiritualism.
1882	The Society of Psychical Research is founded in England to investigate claims of mediums associated with the Spiritualist movement. Its American counterpart is founded in 1885.
1875–1941	The life of Aleister Crowley. Crowley was a magician whose ideas about spirit communication influence the modern occult movement.
1877–1945	The life of Edgar Cayce, an American psychic and an important figure in the New Age and channeling movements.
1895	Bridget Cleary of Tipperary, Ireland, is accused by her family of a being a "changeling" spirit. Family members torture and kill her, claiming that the "real" Cleary has been abducted by fairies.
1896	Harvard psychologist William James delivers a series of lectures on exceptional mental states for the Lowell Institute, one of which is on "Demoniacal Possession."
1904–1905	The Welsh Revival occurs in Wales and spreads throughout the United Kingdom, attracting nearly a million converts. The revival is influential on the emerging Pentecostal movement as well as modern deliverance ministry.
1906	William Joseph Seymour led a congregation

	on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California, that begins speaking in tongues, performing healings, and casting out demons. Reports of these events attract up to 1,500 people a day. The “Azusa Street Revival” is sometimes regarded as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement.
1906–1907	Clara Germana Cele, a Christian teenager from South Africa, undergoes a series of exorcisms during which she allegedly levitates.
1922	Danish filmmaker Benjamin Christensen produces *Häxan: Witchcraft through the Ages*. It portrays the possessed convents of 17th-century France and is one of the earliest films on possession.
1923	Sigmund Freud publishes his essay “A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis,” which psychoanalyzes a historical account of possession and exorcism that occurred to a Bavarian painter named Christoph Haizmann in the 1670s. Freud interprets Haizmann’s possession as a “neurotic fantasy."
1938	Zora Neale Hurston publishes her nonfiction work *Tell My Horse* about her experiences observing Vodou in Haiti.
1949	The *Washington Post* runs a story about a boy from Mount Rainier, Maryland, who undergoes a series of Catholic exorcisms. The story becomes the basis for William Peter Blatty’s novel *The Exorcist*. The boy is now believed to have been Ronald E. Hunkeler of Cottage City, Maryland.
1959	The Dalai Lama leaves Chinese-occupied Tibet, going into self-imposed exile. He brings with him the Nechung Oracle, an

	advisor who becomes possessed by the deity Pehar. The current Nechung Oracle resides in Dharamsala in Northern India and continues to advise the Dalai Lama and his cabinet.
1962–1965	The Vatican organizes the Second Vatican Council, which updates Catholic rituals and doctrines. Several Catholic exorcists and demonologists have opposed the reforms of the Council, including Malachi Martin and Gabriele Amorth.
1967	Allen Ginsberg, Abbie Hoffman, and others organize an event called “The Great Exorcism and Levitation of the Pentagon” in protest of the Vietnam War.
1967	"The Duquesne Weekend” marks the beginning of the Charismatic Catholic movement. Catholic faculty and students of Duquesne University in Pittsburg hold a spiritual retreat during which they begin speaking in tongues and exhibiting other extraordinary behavior.
1971	William Peter Blatty publishes *The Exorcist*.
1973	The film adaption of *The Exorcist* directed by William Friedkin is released. Audiences experience bouts of fainting and vomiting.
1973	Police close London’s Highgate Cemetery. A panic over an alleged vampire or evil presence in the cemetery leads various groups to investigate or ritually cleanse the cemetery resulting in vandalism and grave desecration.
1976	Psychologists Helen Schucman and William Thetford publish *A Course in Miracles*, containing messages from an “inner voice” that Schucman heard and attributed to Jesus.
1976	Anneliese Michel, a young Catholic woman from Germany, dies from a combination of malnutrition, physical exertion, and

	pneumonia caused by a series of prolonged exorcisms. The case brings significant media attention to the Catholic Church in Germany, which convenes a special committee to reevaluate practices and liturgy related to exorcism.
1977	JZ Knight has her first encounter with "Ramtha," a being she claims is an ancient warrior from Atlantis. Knight becomes famous for channeling Ramtha's messages and founded her organization *The Ramtha School of Enlightenment* (RSE) in 1988.
1981	Arne Cheyenne Johnson is tried for the murder of his landlord and claims he is not guilty by reason of demonic possession. He is found guilty of first-degree manslaughter.
1986–1987	Alice Auma leads a rebellion against the Ugandan government. Auma claims that she was inhabited by the spirit of an Italian soldier named Lawena and that the Holy Spirit gave her soldiers supernatural powers.
1990	Cardinal John O'Connor reads from the novel *The Exorcist* in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City as part of a homily about the reality of evil.
1990	The International Association of Exorcists is formed by six Catholic priests. Their first meeting is held in 1992.
1998	The Catholic Church revises the rite of exorcism as part of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The new rite is promulgated the following year. Conservative exorcists, such as Gabriele Amorth, object to the revision and are allowed to use older versions of the rite.
2005	Irina Cornici, a young nun who suffered from mental illness, dies during an exorcism

	performed by an Orthodox priest in Tanacu, Romania.
2009–2010	Israeli Kabaalist Rabbi HaRav David Batzri attempts to exorcise a man in Brazil using the telecommunications program Skype. The exorcism proves unsuccessful, and Batzri has to meet the possessed man in the flesh to help him. In 2014, evangelical exorcist Bob Larson performs an exorcism via Skype on a man in Norway, which he claims was effective.
2011–2012	Fifteen girls in Le Roy, New York, experience anomalous twitching and seizures, receiving national media attention. A similar incident occurs from 2006 to 2007 at a Catholic boarding school in Chalco, Mexico, affecting 512 girls. The medical community attributes both cases to a psychosomatic illness known as conversion disorder.
2013	Thomas Paprocki, bishop of Springfield, Illinois, holds a public exorcism in protest after his state legalized gay marriage. Paprocki specifies that this was a “minor exorcism,” and that his ritual is meant to petition God’s help to repel the power of evil.

A

ABIMELECH

The story of Abimelech, a character who is affected by an "evil spirit" sent by God, is found in the book of Judges in the Jewish Tanakh/Christian Old Testament. The story of Abimelech is set within the era of the "judges"—individuals such as Othniel, Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. Despite the book's title, these leaders function more as military deliverers than judicial figures. Judges depicts the period between the ancient Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt under Moses and the beginning of the Israelite monarchy under Saul and David. While the final form of the book dates to a much later time, the events it purports to describe are set sometime before the year 1000 BCE. Unlike the more well-known figures from Judges, Abimelech is not appointed by God as a military deliverer and does not save the Israelites from the repeated pattern of Israelite disobedience against God, divine punishment, Israelite repentance, God's raising of a deliverer, and that deliverer saving the Israelites from the hands of their oppressors (see Judg. 2:11–19). Instead, Abimelech attempts to establish himself as king over Israel without divine sanction, an act that ends in his dishonorable death.

Abimelech, whose name in Hebrew means "my father is king," is introduced as one of the seventy sons of Gideon/Jerubbaal (Judg. 8:30–31). Specifically, he is the son of Gideon's concubine from Shechem. The remainder of the story unfolds as follows: Abimelech attempts to become king over the city of Shechem by gaining the trust of his mother's relatives (Judg. 9:1–3). The ruling lords of Shechem give Abimelech their support—along with seventy pieces of silver from the local temple, with which Abimelech hires followers (Judg. 9:4). Next, Abimelech kills all seventy of his brothers, with the exclusion of Jotham, who manages to survive (Judg. 9:5). Following the slaughter of his brothers, the lords of Shechem make Abimelech king (9:6). Judges 9:22 then records that Abimelech rules for three years. However, the text next notes that God sends a *rûaḥ ra'ah*, Hebrew for an "evil spirit," between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem, causing them to rebel against Abimelech (Judg. 9:23). The following verse explains that this happens so that the murders of Abimelech's brothers might

be avenged—and Abimelech and the conspiring lords of Shechem indicted for their roles in that event (9:24). Subsequently, the lords rebel against Abimelech (9:25–49). The story ends when Abimelech dies disgracefully in a battle, killed by a woman who dropped a millstone on his head from a wall above (Judg. 9:50–55; see 2 Sam. 11:18–21). Judges 9:56–57 concludes by noting that all of this happened so that God might repay Abimelech and the lords of Shechem for their actions.

***Death of Abimelech*. Engraving by E. Goebel on an illustration by Gustave Dore (1833–1883) for *The Bible in Pictures*. (Prisma/UIG/Getty Images)**

While there is no direct mention of possession, the presence of the evil spirit is a clear instance of how the Hebrew Bible portrays the Israelite god as controlling and intervening in human affairs. The deity's apparent control of the spirit reinforces the idea that God dictates the actions of otherworldly forces, including malicious spirits. Occasionally, such a divinely sent spirit is described as evil. The "evil spirit" in 9:23 is markedly different from the other appearances of a divine spirit in the book of Judges, where the "spirit of the LORD" inspires and/or gives strength to the military deliverers (see Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; and 15:14). Such empowerment marks the actions of those leaders as divinely sanctioned; in contrast, the "evil spirit" in the story of Abimelech is destructive and symbolizes God's displeasure with Abimelech's actions.

Kelly J. Murphy

See also: Judaism; Rûaḥ; Saul

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AFRO-ATLANTIC RELIGIONS

The term "Afro-Atlantic religions" refers to a variety of religions that developed in different parts of North America, South America, and the Caribbean combining indigenous African traditions with elements from other cultures. The most well-known Afro-Atlantic religions are Vodou in Haiti, Santería (also called Orisha religion) in Cuba, Candomblé and Umbanda in Brazil, and the Orisha religion in Trinidad and Tobago. These and other Afro-Atlantic religions developed as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade when traditional African religions were adapted to life on a new continent. Most Afro-Atlantic religions honor deities and spirits known as *loa* or *orisha*, which have their origin in traditional African deities. A core element of their belief systems is the reciprocal relationship between the supernatural entities (spirits or deities) and human beings. The devotees must fulfill their obligations toward the deities and spirits in order to maintain or receive the spiritual energy that is called *ashe* in Yoruba-derived religions. If *ashe* is diminished, a person lives without harmony and suffers emotional, physical, or even social and economic problems. In case of a problem, devotees need to discover the reason for the imbalance. Ways to gain *ashe* include attending ceremonies and offerings to the deities and spirits. Spirit possession is another way to honor the deities and spirits.

Spirit possession in Afro-Atlantic religions is regarded as means of communication between the supernatural entities and human beings. It is not normally perceived as demonic or an affliction caused by an external power but as something positive. It also empowers the possessed to express different aspects of their personality in a judgment-free environment. Even strange

behavior is tolerated because it is caused by the deity and not by the possessed themselves.

Possession usually takes place during a ceremony conducted by a religious community on specific consecrated grounds. It is initiated with specific rituals, supported by drum music and singing. Possession may manifest itself in different ways. Some dance erratically, fall to the ground as if having a seizure, or exhibit contorted facial expressions to reveal the presence of a deity or spirit. Others walk, speak, and interact with the audience, but with a different personality. Some even express a different gender identity while possessed. The possession can last from a few minutes to several hours, depending on the depth of the experience, the function of the ceremony, and the religious tradition.

Spirit possession shows honor to the deities and spirits because it allows these beings to be "present" at the ceremony. During a limited time the human host allows an *orisha* or *loa* to take possession over their body in order to communicate with the other participants of the ceremony. In Vodou (sometimes called Voodoo, although this term is rejected by some devotees because of its association with Hollywood's sensationalized depiction of their religion) possession is described as "riding a horse," in which the horse is the human being and the rider is the *loa*. This metaphor shows that the possessing entity is understood to be in control. In some traditions the possessed is described as unconscious or semi-conscious. In others the "medium" describes being aware of what goes on but is unable to interfere.

Becoming a medium may involve a long training period to become a proper vessel for supernatural beings. Anomalous experiences are often interpreted as undeveloped abilities. The initial spirit possession is often a shocking experience and described as rough and uncontrolled. It is interpreted as a call of the spirit or deity to the person who should become initiated into the tradition. Initiation can be quite a long and—depending on the tradition—an expensive process. During the initiation the novice learns to accept the experience but also the correct ways to handle it, even to control the spirit and to end the possession. In this way spirit possession is regarded as religious obligation, although not every devotee experiences it. In some Afro-Atlantic religions only specially trained devotees can become mediums, while in others the experience is accessible for a wider group of devotees.

The medium usually feels the approaching spirit and stumbles slightly before shaking or waving around. Members of the community will

immediately come and support the person, for instance, by taking everything off the body that might be damaged or dangerous (e.g., glasses, watch, and jewelry). They will also stay with the medium in case he or she falls to the ground. The possession itself begins differently, according to the temperament of the spirit and the experience of the medium. Some spirits are fiercer than others and take control of the medium suddenly while others take more time.

Devotees of Afro-Atlantic religions interpret spirit possession in distinct ways, depending often on the nature of the entities. In Vodou, for instance, the first moments are described as a struggle between the soul of the host and the *loa*. During the possession the part of the soul that represents the personality of the human being (called *ti bon anj*, little good angel), leaves the body so that the *loa* can take control. To a certain degree the body is no longer human but a *loa* during the possession. Afterward, the medium cannot remember what has happened and will also not be made responsible for anything that has happened during the possession. When the *loa* is fully in control of the body, assistants bring specific paraphernalia that are connected to the particular *loa* (e.g., dresses in specific colors, a hat or a crown, a sword, a pipe, necklaces, and so on). Properly dressed, the *loa* will then join the community by drinking, eating, and speaking to the audience. In this sense, spirit possession in Vodou has a theatrical side.

While a trained medium in Vodou can incorporate various entities, even during one ceremony, this is not the case in Cuban Santería. According to Santería cosmology a person is already linked to their guardian *orisha* before birth, and this bond lasts a lifetime. This relationship is then confirmed in an initiation during which the *orisha* is "enthroned" onto the head of the novice. Anthropologist Mary Ann Clark writes that the initiation opens the pathway between human and *orisha* in such a way that the novice becomes the embodiment of the *orisha*. However, while the possession is welcomed, the temporary absence of the human soul in the human body is perceived as a struggle. As soon as the orisha has taken over control of the body, the possessed person has no recollection of what is going on and shows only behavior typical for the *orisha*.

In Brazilian Umbanda the *guías* (spiritual guides) that take control of a medium are perceived as individuals (e.g., spirits of African slaves, of indigenous or creole people from the Amazon, of sailors, of cowboys, or of gypsies). Each possessing entity is described as having a specific "vibration"

that allows devotees to identify it. They enter human hosts in order to help people, and the main goal of possession is to offer advice to the community and other clients. The *orishas* (African deities) that are also worshiped in Umbanda are regarded as too powerful to manifest in a human body. It is believed that some *orishas* were human before becoming deities and can therefore possess human bodies. However, the vast majority of possessions in Umbanda take place between *guías* and mediums. These guides are perceived as more powerful than human beings but also as distinct from the *orishas* due to their former physical life on earth. These *guías* are described as approachable by mediums who will work with them during weekly sessions. The rituals in which the mediums are possessed by the spiritual guides are the core feature of Umbanda and provide the crucial means of communication between humans and spiritual beings.

Brazilian Candomblé, which is developed around the veneration of *orishas*, has a distinct metaphysical interpretation of what happens during spirit possession. *Orishas* are understood as forces of nature, or pure energy. Just as it is impossible for a human being to become a thunderstorm or lightning, it is also impossible to become "possessed" by an *orisha*. Candomblé devotees therefore reject the term "spirit possession" to describe the altered states that occur during their rituals. Manifesting the energy of an *orisha* and becoming a full member of the community in Candomblé requires years of training. It is believed that for ordinary people, the energy of an *orisha* will cause them to shake and collapse to the ground. Novice mediums are regarded like children who must relearn how to eat, walk, dance, and sing while controlling this energy. The goal of initiation is to prepare the connection between the medium and a number of *orishas* (usually three). It is understood that a part of these *orishas* always remains in the human body, something like an echo. During future ceremonies, when an *orisha* wants to join, it will rise from within the medium's body and take control.

In this sense, Candomblé does not regard mediumship as possession by an external force but as a transformation of a human body from within. The *orishas* are understood to surpass human individuality. After the first initiation, the medium is permanently transformed by the initial identification with the divine. In following encounters the human part of the medium's consciousness is taken over by the divine part. Hence, the Candomblé medium does not host two or more personalities as in other Afro-Atlantic religions, but rather allows one section of their consciousness to outshine the

other. According to the Brazilian anthropologist Marcio Goldman, the two worlds of the *orishas* and of humans converge during a possession: human and *orisha* almost overlap and create together two new agencies, a person and an individual *orisha*. Therefore, a Candomblé medium becomes a sort of divine entity during possession. Goldman argues that "becoming" is not identical with transformation, but rather acknowledges the view that an active and creative process occurs during initiation.

The medium, as well as the *orisha* linked to them, is not born ready-made but constructed through initiation. A generic *orisha* has no individuality, while the *orisha* linked to a medium has acquired an individual personality. This interpretation explains the differences between the understanding of the *orishas* as forces of nature and the understanding of *orishas* as spiritual entities with individual personalities. It also explains how an *orisha* can be present in several bodies at the same time and how there can be so many variations of the same *orisha*. Each initiation ritual creates one specific being within the human; possessed agency and possessing agency become inseparably merged and create a unique entity. The human element also plays a role in the transformation process so that each incident of spirit possession is different.

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See also: Brazil; Loa; Orisha; Umbanda

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AMITYVILLE HORROR, THE

George and Kathy Lutz moved into their home in Amityville, New York, in 1975, and claimed that over the course of the following 28 days they experienced a variety of paranormal phenomena. Their story received national attention in 1975 with the publication of Jay Anson's book *The Amityville Horror*, which was turned into a horror film of the same name in 1979. The result has lasted far beyond the 1970s, with the Lutzes and *The Amityville Horror* being the subject of a continuing debate about the veracity of the experiences as well as a horror franchise.

George and Kathy Lutz and their three children moved into their home in Amityville in December 1975. Prior to purchasing the home they were informed by their realtor that the house was the site of the DeFeo Family murders. In the early morning of November 14, 1974, Ronald "Butch" DeFeo Jr. killed six of his family members with a .35-caliber Marlin rifle. He began with his father Ronald Sr., then his mother, two brothers, and two sisters. DeFeo was found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to 25 years to life. In one of several stories presented as his defense, he claimed that voices had told him to commit the murders.

George and Kathy Lutz, former owners of the house on 112 Ocean Avenue in Amityville, New York, pose during a press tour for the book, *The Amityville Horror*, in London, England. The Lutzes recounted their stories to scriptwriter Jay Anson who wrote the book. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Although they were not devout, George and Kathy Lutz had Christian religious backgrounds, Methodist and Catholic respectively. This made them receptive to a friend's encouragement that they have the house blessed as they moved in. Father Ralph Pecoraro (referred to in Anson's book as Father Mancuso) performed the blessing and claimed that as he prayed and sprinkled holy water, he heard a voice demanding that he leave the home. He did not share this experience with the Lutzes but did call later to encourage them to avoid the room where he claimed the experience occurred.

This was just the beginning of strange events said to take place in the house. Over the next 28 days the Lutzes reported experiencing a variety of paranormal phenomena. This included swarms of flies in winter, George waking each morning at the alleged time of the DeFeo murders at 3:15 a.m., nightmares about the murders, sensations of an invisible presence or force, loud sounds and inexplicable smells, intense cold spots, levitations, and the floating specter of a pig's head with glowing red eyes. George also reported that he awoke one night to see his wife take on the appearance of a 90-year-old hag.

In response to these events, the Lutzes performed their own blessing in January 1976. The experiences were so frightening that they decided to move out of the house immediately, leaving their belongings behind. Due to the urgency of their housing situation, the Lutzes stayed at Kathy's mother's house, and they claimed that the strange phenomena followed them there.

After receiving an invitation from a reporter with a local television station, demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren investigated the house in 1976, 20 days after the Lutzes left. They were part of a small group of investigators that included reporters and parapsychologists. The Lutzes refused to re-enter the home for the investigation. The Warrens claimed that they too experienced paranormal phenomena during their investigation. Ed claimed to be pushed and smothered by an invisible presence. Lorraine, drawing upon her clairvoyant abilities, claimed to feel overwhelmed by a demonic presence. After Ed's death, Lorraine stated that this case impacted the two of them more than any other case they worked on.

The Warrens claimed that several elements contributed to the manifestations in the house. These included the spirit of John Ketchum, allegedly a black magician who had owned a cottage on the land where the Lutz house stood. His remains were said to still be on the property. The Warrens also said that a local Indian tribe had used the land to care for the

sick and mentally ill and that this left negative energy. All of this was said to attract demonic spirits, and it was these demons that had influenced Ronald DeFeo Jr., and plagued the Lutzes.

The story of the Lutzes' experiences were shared in print in the *New York Sunday News* on July 18, 1976, in "Life in a Haunted House," and in the April 1977 edition of *Good Housekeeping* magazine in a story titled "Our Dream House Was Haunted." But it was Jay Anson's book, *The Amityville Horror*, published in 1977, that made the story a permanent fixture in the annals of the paranormal and horror. Anson listened to many hours of tape-recorded conversations with the Lutzes in preparation for the book, which sold over six million copies and has been republished. Over the years a number of other books have been published describing but also developing and trying to explain the Lutzes' experiences.

The claims of horrific paranormal experiences in the Amityville home have not been received without skepticism. Critics have noted that reports on Father Pecoraro are inconsistent. Christopher Lutz, son of Kathy and stepson of George, claimed in an interview in 2011 that although some strange experiences took place, the way they are presented in Anson's book and the 1979 film is deliberately exaggerated. He and other critics have alleged that the main thrust of the claims is actually a fictional story created by George Lutz, Jay Anson, and William Weber, Ronald DeFeo Jr.'s defense attorney. At one point Weber sued and claimed that the Lutzes stole the idea and used it without him. The case was eventually settled. Even those who believe in the paranormal have been skeptical, including Roxanne Salch Kaplan, coauthor of *The Amityville Horror Conspiracy* (1995). However, Daniel Lutz, Kathy's son and stepson of George, stated in a 2013 documentary that the events were real. The debate continues online regarding the legitimacy of the Lutzes' claims as well as those of some paranormal investigators such as the Warrens.

The Lutz house has had a number of owners over the years. None of them have reported experiencing anything unusual. The original home still exists, but it has been renovated to change its distinctive Dutch colonial look, particularly the unique windows. The address was also changed to discourage visitors. Local residents and authorities have not been happy with the publicity surrounding the home.

Anson's book was made into a film in 1979 titled *The Amityville Horror* starring James Brolin and Margot Kidder. Since the initial film, ten others

have been made about it for film and television, including a 2005 remake of the 1979 treatment, starring Ryan Reynolds and Melissa George as the Lutzes; one made for television, which aired on NBC; as well as direct-to-video productions. George and Kathy divorced in the late 1980s. Kathy Lutz died on August 17, 2004, at 57. George Lutz died on May 8, 2006, at 59.

John W. Morehead

See also: Film; Warren, Ed and Lorraine

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AMORTH, GABRIELE

Gabriele Amorth (1925–) is an Italian Roman Catholic priest and the chief exorcist for the Diocese of Rome. He is honorary president for life of the International Association of Exorcists, which he helped to found. He has an active media presence and has been a leading figure in the revival of Catholic exorcism in the 21st century. He is also a controversial figure, and some Catholic authorities regard his work as an embarrassment. Even priests who are sympathetic to claims of possession have dismissed Amorth's claims as unbelievable and sensationalistic and have questioned whether Amorth's approach to exorcism is consistent with Catholic theology and canon law.

Amorth was born in Modena, Emilia. He felt his religious vocation at the age of fifteen and was ordained as a priest in 1954. Amorth received the faculty of exorcist in June 1986 from Cardinal Ugo Poletti. He studied exorcism under Candido Amantini (1914–1992) an exorcist with whom he shared a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary. Amorth became Amantini's successor and inherited some of his clients. In a 2013 interview he claimed to have exorcised over 160,000 demons throughout his career.

Amorth has repeatedly urged Church authorities to take exorcism more seriously. When a new version of the Catholic rite of exorcism was

promulgated in 1999, Amorth described the new ritual as “a joke” and “a blunt sword.” The new rite specified that exorcism may only be performed once the presence of the Devil is confirmed, but Amorth countered that exorcism is the only way to confirm demonic presence. Amorth is highly critical of the reforms of Vatican II and has implied that Satan has influenced the Vatican into downplaying exorcism. In 2013 he urged Pope Francis to train more exorcists and to authorize all priests with such training to perform exorcisms.

Many of Amorth’s ideas about possession and exorcism reflect popular ideas about the demonic that are not part of the Church’s official teachings. He has suggested that possession and organized Satanism are on the rise due to such influences as rock music, Ouija boards, J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* novels, and yoga. He has claimed that Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin were possessed. He also prescribes exorcism for relieving curses placed on people by practitioners of witchcraft or Afro-Atlantic religions.

Amorth is a member of the Society of Saint Paul, a Catholic group known for its involvement with mass media. He has demonstrated more influence with the media regarding matters of exorcism than the Church hierarchy. He has written four books and is heavily involved in film. He described *The Exorcist* as his favorite film, and in 2011 he appeared at a film festival to introduce the horror film *The Rite*. He also starred in the 2013 documentary *The Exorcist in the 21st Century.*

Joseph P. Laycock

See also: Catholicism; Film; International Association of Exorcists

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ANCIENT NEAR EAST, THE

The structured classification of ghosts, spirit possession, and demon expulsion are attested throughout the diverse landscape of the ancient Near East. Ancient Near Eastern (aNE) culture and civilization encompassed the geographical area roughly equivalent to the modern Middle East, and lasted from the rise of the Sumerian Empire (c. 4000 BCE) until the rise of Alexander the Great (r. 336–323 BCE). Societies in Mesopotamia (Sumer, Assyria, Babylon) and Syria-Palestine (Canaanite city states, Ugarit, Syria, Mari, Ebla, Israel, and Judah) share common aNE characteristics. Ancient Egypt frequently appears under the aNE scholarly umbrella; however, the complex ancient Egyptian views on death, the afterlife, and demonology vary from those found in the material and literary evidence from the geographic ancient Near East. Evidence of spirit possession and demon exorcism appears in a range of contexts, including epic literature, tomb inscriptions, and magical-medical texts. The concepts of "ghost," "demon," "possession," and "exorcism" all are essential elements to aNE views on death and the afterlife.

Textual and material aNE evidence demonstrates a belief that one's identity continued into the afterlife. Mesopotamian and Syrian texts provide significant lexical evidence for the aNE characterization of demons. A person's identity was constructed of several elements, including an *eṭemmu* (ghost spirit), a *napištu* (vital life force), and a *zāqīqu* (breath/wind spirit). Despite the fact that these terms describe different elements of a person's identity, they often are used interchangeably in texts. Upon death, a person's *zāqīqu* and *eṭemmu* left the land of the living to journey to the netherworld. A deceased person (*mītu*) was differentiated from a ghost (*eṭemmu*) and a corpse (*pagru*). While the *pagru* maintained a human appearance, the *eṭemmu* frequently appeared nonhuman with features of several animal species. In Mari, the category of *malikū* seems to represent a range of deceased persons (e.g., ghosts, demons, and deceased royalty cf. the *mlkm* in Ugarit).

Properly performed burial and mourning rites were essential to ensure the journey of the deceased from the land of the living to the netherworld. Physically, one entered the netherworld through the grave. Epic texts, however, represent the netherworld as a great distance from earth, requiring a treacherous journey. The journey to the afterlife entailed numerous crossings. First, one passed over a vast landscape occupied by threatening demons. In the second phase of the journey, the deceased passed over a river separating the realm of the dead from the land of the living. Third, one was required to pass through the seven gates of the netherworld. Each stage of the journey

bore risk, and aNE textual and material evidence demonstrate concern with a person's safe passage. A Phoenician tomb inscription from the eighth century BCE invokes divine protection from demons who might attack the deceased while they journey over the steppe en route to the netherworld. Moreover, archaeologists report that aNE tombs often contained amulets among grave goods. Several amulets are inscribed with the names of the deceased and divine names (or divine images, such as a hand), indicating an invocation for protection. Chthonic (underworld) deities provided protection for each phase of the journey to the netherworld. Ancient Ugaritic texts detail mortuary offerings intended to persuade deities in their protective task. While one accessed the netherworld directly through the tomb; safe transport to the netherworld required sufficient provision and divine protection.

Once in the netherworld, a ghost remained either apathetic toward the living, benevolent toward kin, or malevolent toward both kin and stranger. The circumstance of death and post-mortem treatment impacted the interaction between the living and the dead. On the one hand, as long as living kin provided continuous mortuary offerings of sufficient quality and quantity, a ghost most likely would remain at peace. On the other hand, if one suffered a violent, unnatural, or early death, their spirit might turn vengeful. Furthermore, if a person was denied burial, mourning rites, and post-mortem offerings, their spirit might become restless and hostile.

ANE texts designate hostile ghosts (demons) with generalized categories (e.g., *alû-*, *utukka-*, *rābiṣu-*, *gallû*-demons) and with proper names. Mesopotamian texts identify demons associated with specific illnesses; medical texts, therefore, reference particular demons associated with symptoms (e.g., *Asakku, Aḫḫazu, Bennu, Mukīl-rēš lemutti).* Other texts refer to demons who are associated with time periods or human experiences, such as those associated with childbirth or the night (e.g., *lilû, lilitu*). Each of these demons results from different provocations.

In contrast to the abundant evidence concerning Mesopotamian demons, scholars lack significant evidence to the characterization of demons in other aNE cultures. In ancient texts from Ugarit, demonology is poorly attested. Besides the mention of demons in some apotropaic texts, epic literature indicates that the much-feared chthonic figure *Mot* functioned less as a god and more as a demon. *Mot* neither received offerings like chthonic deities nor had his own cult. Texts claim that if provoked, *Mot* might attack a city and attack the living through open windows (cf., Jeremiah 9:20, which similarly

references a force from the netherworld attacking cities and its inhabitants). Scant additional evidence directly concerns demons and possession in Canaanite culture. Inscribed and illustrated Aramaic bowls include names of demons, and appear to have been used in exorcism rites. Biblical literature from Israel and Judah contains a small number of cryptic references to necromantic rites. Finally, exorcism texts originating from several Syria-Palestine states describe specific demons and their exorcism by name (i.e., *Ḥabḥaby* from Ebla). Scholars rely upon comparative analysis between the vast Mesopotamian collection of explicit references to spirit possession and expulsion and limited evidence from other aNE cultures.

Restless or hostile demons interacted with the living in several ways. Demons might appear within a house or pursue victims on city streets. Alternatively, demons might be far more intrusive upon their victim, annexing their bodies and aggravating their dreams. Demon possession resulted from several scenarios, including indiscriminate possession without provocation, generalized illness, childbirth complication, and curses. In the latter scenario, a sorcerer or god might send a demon to attack a living victim, resulting in possession. Often, texts describe demon possession with physical characteristics. Victims are described as having several symptoms, such as shortness of breath, striking one's face and shouting aloud, or contracting generalized maladies. Extensive Mesopotamian medical texts detail the diagnosis of possession and resulting characteristics, along with prescribed rites for expulsion.

ANE rites of exorcism simultaneously treated the victim's symptoms and provided passage for the demon back to the netherworld. Effectively, exorcism rites first released the demon from the inhabited person and then sought to rebury the hostile spirit through a variety of methods. Mesopotamian treatments often required a magical-medical professional, who recited texts and performed specialized rites intended to expel an inhabiting ghost. At the same time, texts also reference home remedies for spirit possession. In either situation, expulsion remedies might include several ritualized acts (e.g., recitation of specific formulary; invocation of a deity for protection; formation and manipulation of amulets; anointing the victim with ointment; consumption of magical potions; and proxy burial of a figurine). Mesopotamian texts suggest that exorcisms were most effective if performed during the specific period in which the dead returned to collect their food and drink offerings.

Material and textual evidence reveals that spirit possession and demon expulsion in the aNE cultural context maintained several fundamental similarities, despite distinctions from one aNE society to the next. The continuation of human identity in the afterlife, the presence of apathetic, benevolent and malevolent ghosts, and the numerous magical-medical remedies for expulsion appear across aNE societies throughout its millennia-long history.

F. Dorie Mansen

See also: Incantation Bowl; Judaism

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Related Primary Document: An Ugaritic Exorcism Incantation: KTU 1.169 (Ancient Near East, Second Millennium BCE)

The Ugaritic tablets discovered at Ras Shamra during excavations since 1928 have proven to be one of the most significant collections of ancient Near Eastern texts discovered in the last century. Over 1,500 texts including letters, administrative records, and mythological epics were unearthed from the Mediterranean port city, providing unique insight into the political and religious landscape of the northern Levant at the end of the second millennium BCE. Most of the tablets are dated to the last two centuries of the city's existence (c. 1400–1190 BCE), before its abrupt destruction at the hands of the attacking "Sea Peoples." The discovery of the tablets led to significant discussion as scholars tried to decipher the unknown script and place it among the Northwestern Semitic languages.

Since the 1968 discovery of the exorcism incantation tablet KTU 1.169

(RIH 78/20), scholars have produced a wide variety of possible translations. Chief among the interpretive concerns is the question of what malicious entity is targeted by the exorcism ritual. Scholars have proposed everything from demons to sorcerers to sexual dysfunctions as possible subjects for this incantation. Several factors contribute to the complexity of the text and the various interpretations. First, the presence of multiple hapax legomena (words that appear only once) with little cognate evidence among related Semitic languages complicates the decipherment of the tablet. Second, the identification of the participants involved in the incantation ceremony has been widely disputed among translators. Finally, determining which lines are directed towards the afflicted individual and which lines are directed towards the afflicting spiritual entity is frequently disputed and can itself cause nearly opposing interpretations of the incantation. The tablet opens with a title, followed by the incantation which presumably was spoken to a combination of the afflicted individual and the afflicting spirit. The text calls upon the names of the popular Canaanite deities Baal, Horon, El, and Atarti, as well as the minor deities known as the "Divine Servants" (cf. KTU 1.5:8–9) to drive out the afflicting spirit. Little is known about what ceremonial practices would have taken place while the incantation was recited. For further discussion of the translational debates and challenges as well as alternatively proposed translations, see the recommendations for further reading.

To cast out the evil spirit (afflicting) a young man:
May the breath of Baal cast you out,
may you be cast out before the voice of the priest:
like smoke from windows, like a serpent from the foot of pillars,
like goats from the summit, like lions from the den.
The ceremonial rod is ready. Approach the ceremonial rod.
You have sinned against your back,
and you have been wicked to your body.
Eat the bread of fasting, drink the juice of exceedingly bad taste:
in the heights, in the waters,
in the dark place, in the holy place.
Therefore O Sorcerer, O Evil Spirit,
may Horon drive away (your) colleagues,
and the Divine Servants (drive away) your friends.
Until the end of time do not speak;

do not stutter your teeth, you will certainly not be strong!
May the cloth of El cover you;
may the cloak of El cover you.
From a man this sin pours out into the earth,
from the son of man, your sickness be peeled.
Behold by the spirit of the great Artarti…

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Introduction and Translation by Nicholas R. Werse

ANTHONY, SAINT

St. Anthony of Egypt, also known as St. Anthony the Great, was the first exemplar of the Christian monk in the early fourth century CE. His biographer, Athanasius, places his death around the year 356 at the age of 105. Athanasius's *Life of Anthony*, written around 357 CE, is the main source for Anthony's life and the basis of the traditions surrounding Anthony in the Western Christian tradition. Other sources include brief narratives in the collected sayings of the desert fathers, Jerome's *Life of Paul the Hermit*, and a collection of Anthony's letters. These letters have only recently been made widely available and their authenticity established. Anthony is the model for most subsequent depictions of Christian monks who battle Satan and his demons. The accounts of demons in the *Life* form the basis of a long tradition of Christian demonology.

Much of the *Life of Anthony* is devoted to his contests with Satan and demons. He encounters demons as a young ascetic, and they tempt him by suggesting thoughts of wealth, comfort, and sexual pleasure. Anthony easily dismisses these intrusive thoughts. Next, the demons test him with

apparitions, including an attractive woman and an Ethiopian child. Again, Anthony displays no weakness. He moves to an abandoned tomb where he confronts demons who take on physical form and attack him over days. These encounters are noisy and produce real effects on the monk's body. His disciples find him nearly dead from beatings, but Anthony recovers and returns to rebuke the demons. In this passage, the demons also take on the appearance of wild beasts and reptiles in their attack on Anthony, and artists take up this scene with enthusiasm in the late middle ages and early modern period. After his contest in the tomb, Anthony moves to an empty fortress and remains for twenty years of struggle with demons. Anthony emerges triumphant. From this time, he performs exorcisms and advises other monks on the best techniques for spiritual combat.

Several themes concerning demons and struggle against the demonic recur in the *Life of Anthony*. The demonic is substantially real and exists outside the Christian person. Demons are related to vices, and prey on individual's weaknesses but are not a natural part of the human psyche. Demons arrive invisibly as immoral thoughts, depressing suggestions, and distracting ideas, but they also take visual and aural form when the introduction of evil thoughts is not successful in causing a monk to fall away from Christian ascetic practice. On occasion, demons take physical forms and are capable of doing bodily harm to the monk. Failure in Christian practice is the main goal of demonic interference with Anthony, other monks, and Christians in general. Demons in the *Life of Anthony* are regularly identified with non-Christian deities, especially Egyptian gods. Anthony's triumph over his demonic tormenters provides proof of Christ's triumph over essentially powerless local religion. Anthony provides fellow monks and other visitors with techniques for fighting Satan and his demons through example and through two discourses. Demonic thoughts should be countered with encouraging reflections on the powerlessness of Satan, the victory of Christ, and scriptural passages. The Christian ascetic fights the demonic by maintaining a steadfast calm in the face of frightening onslaughts. In this way, Satan will be put to shame.

Temptation of St. Anthony. **Engraving by Martin Schon-gaver, ca. 1470s. (Library of Congress)**

Anthony's own demonology, revealed in his letters, differs significantly from that put forward by his biographer. Anthony was concerned with gnosis, the saving knowledge of God, and his understanding of the demonic is closely related to this theme. For Anthony, demons never took visible form and could only appear in the world through the bodies of those under their influence. Demons were the result of the diversification of beings in the fall from an original divine unity. The monk battled against the temptations of demonic thoughts in order to progress back towards the oneness and simplicity of the knowledge of God. This progress, rather than steadfastness, is the mark of the expert monk. Although Anthony's own conception of demons and spiritual combat has resonance in the Christian monastic tradition, it is not his own theories but rather his story and the demonology of the *Life of Anthony* by Athanasius that makes Anthony the exemplar of the monk who struggles with demons in Western Christianity.

The figure of Anthony has inspired a number of artistic and literary works over the course of Christian history. Representations of the "temptations" of Anthony became popular in the 16th century, and Hieronymous Bosch's paintings on the theme are especially well known. More recently, Salvador

Dali painted Anthony in combat with the animalistic demons and Gustave Flaubert produced a literary version.

Kate Wilkinson

See also: Ergotism

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ANTIQUITY

Although it was more common in classical antiquity to think in terms of supernatural agents acting upon humans rather than indwelling them, gods, demons, and ghosts were commonly thought capable of possessing both men and women, with a variety of consequences. Where such possession was believed to be harmful, exorcism was employed, although evidence for exorcism, in the narrow sense of expelling a malign entity from a human host, is scant before the beginning of the Roman imperial period.

Possession could be considered valuable and actively solicited, particularly where associated with oracular divination, magical rituals, or artistic activity. Possession by the god Apollo, was, for example, central to the ancient Pythian oracle at Delphi, as well those of Claros and Didyma. Similarly, a class of freelance diviners, the *engastrimuthoi* (literally “belly-talkers”), who plied their trade throughout the Mediterranean from at least the fifth century BCE claimed their powers came from supernatural beings that possessed them. Indeed, evidence from Greco-Roman Egypt shows that some used rituals to actively seek possession by demons in order to acquire such an ability. Possession by a god or demon was a significant element in the practice of theurgy, the use of rituals to invoke the presence of, or achieve union with, the divine, a development particularly associated with

Neoplatonism in the later empire. Possession by the Muses, daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus, were believed, particularly in early Greece, to be key to the creation of poetry, music, and dance. However, some forms of divine possession were more ambiguous and potentially problematic. Possession associated with the ecstatic worship characteristic of gods such as Dionysus or Cybele could be regarded as threatening to both individuals and the wider society. Possession associated with love, and particularly the activity of Eros and Aphrodite, could be equally disastrous, seen most famously in the case of Phaedra, the wife of Theseus whom Aphrodite cursed to fall in love with Theseus's son from a previous union.

Some forms of possession were perceived to be unequivocally harmful to the human host either because they were thought to cause illness or because of the abnormal and self-destructive behavior exhibited by the victim. Demons were chiefly held responsible for such harmful possession, although it is important to note that ideas about demons in the Greek and Roman worlds varied widely and demons were not always thought of as malign. Initially the Greek term *daimon* was chiefly used to refer to unidentifiable, irrational, discarnate, lesser spirits who were either independent or functioned as intermediaries between the worlds of humans and gods. Early Greek sources use this term to describe forces behind such phenomena as divination and the execution of divine vengeance. Some were commonly believed to be spirits of the dead, or, more specifically, the dead heroes of the Golden Age, the untimely dead, or the dead who had lived evil lives. For some, such as Plato, demons were largely benevolent and useful; indeed, Socrates could talk of his *daimonion* (a diminutive of daimon), as a trustworthy internal voice that restrained him from doing wrong. However, most people believed *daimons* to be capricious and dangerous, and from at least the time of Homer onwards they were predominantly associated with human misfortune (for example, Elpenor in the Odyssey, who dies after becoming drunk and falling from a roof or the suicide of young women). From about the second century CE demons became increasingly assumed to be evil, something that developed under Jewish and Christian influence but also emerged independently, as is evident from the demonology apparent in the influential Chaldean Oracles. Ghosts too could be thought responsible for harmful possession although they were often conceived of as synonymous with demons. Such ghosts belonged to those who had met untimely or violent deaths or whose remains had not received proper burial. Ghosts were

generally believed to be dangerous in their own right or open to the malevolent control of magicians and witches.

Exorcism in the classical world could take a number of forms. In some cases the practice appears to have been straightforward, involving threats or commands aimed at the demon or ghost; indeed, the Greek word *exorkidzo*, from which the English term *exorcism*, is derived, means to adjure or to command. However, exorcisms often involved complex preparations and rituals, and the use of specially crafted objects, such as amulets and rings, and they were carried out by skilled, though often despised, practitioners. In addition to the recovery of the victim, it was not uncommon for physical proof of the departure of the demon to be expected. Exorcisms in classical antiquity appear to have had much in common with purificatory rites widespread from the archaic period onwards. They were often used to treat ill health, especially where the illness was believed to have resulted from a ritual transgression or the direct action of the gods.

Belief in harmful possession and the practice of exorcism became more widespread from the early imperial period onwards, becoming particularly significant in late antiquity, something apparent in Christian hagiography of that period. Both possession and exorcism were especially identified with peoples associated with the Near East, such as Jews, though those from even further afield, such as India, could also be thought to possess such knowledge. Exorcists and exorcistic practices associated with cultures viewed as exotic and of great antiquity, from the perspective of Greeks and Romans, seem to have been particularly valued; Eleazar, a Jewish exorcist, for example, performed an exorcism using Solomon's ring before the emperor Vespasian. Such a cultural change probably came about largely as a result of the dominance of Christianity, which disseminated ideas that had first become prominent in Judaism from about the third century BCE. However, it could also be found independent of, or only tenuously related to, Christianity or Judaism, for example in the Greek Magical Papyri, a collection of ritual texts from Greco-Roman Egypt or Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, which recounts the exploits of a late first-century neo-Pythagorean wonder-worker and exorcist.

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See also: Daimon; Delphic Oracle; Judaism; New Testament; Sibyl;

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Related Primary Document: "An Excellent Operation for Expelling Demons": PGM 1227–64 (Greco-Roman, Fourth Century CE)

The following passage appears in the "Great Magical Papyrus of Paris" (Bibliotheque Nationale, Suppl. Grec 574). It is one of two major rites for expelling demons in the Greek Magical Papyri (the second is also in PGM IV, 3007–86). This and many of the other Papyri consist of grimoires that were likely compiled and used by trained specialists who worked in Egyptian temples and scriptoria during the Roman period. It includes a variety of ritual operations, including erotic charms and spells to receive divine revelations, for example, as well as cures for fever and headaches. In addition to the exorcisms, there are numerous spells in which demons are bound in service. Although these Papyri reflect the local religious culture of Roman Egypt, the procedures they describe resemble those used by magicians throughout the Mediterranean world in the first centuries of the Common Era. Jewish exorcists and magicians were held in high esteem in that context, and spells often included Jewish and Christian names and themes alongside elements from local religions. Knowledge of divine names and formulae served to establish a ritual actor's authority over spiritual entities. In this performative, therapeutic ritual, the reciter is to invoke Jesus the "chrēstos," literally "the upstanding," a common pun or mistaken rendering of Jesus the "christos," and the formula "the God of Abraham, … Isaac, … and Jacob," alongside a series of "magical names" or voces magicae. *He or she is to stand over the patient and to use an olive branch as a whip while adjuring the demon to leave. The exorcist drives the demon away from the patient at the same time that he or she consigns it to "perdition." After the expulsion, the exorcist is instructed to place a*

prophylactic amulet on the patient with further magical names or a magical symbol inscribed on it.

The original text is written in both Greek and Coptic. The Coptic portion of the text is in italics. Magical names are in small capital letters. "NN" signifies that the reader should supply the name of the person for whom the rite is performed (for Greek deina, "so-and-so," "such a one").

An Excellent Operation for Expelling Demons

Formula to be recited over his or her head: Place olive branches in front of him or her and stand behind him or her and say,

"*Hail, God of Abraham; hail, God of Isaac*; *hail, God of Jacob; Jesus the upstanding* [*chrēstos*], *the holy spirit, the son of the father, who is under the seven, who is within the seven. Bring Iao Sabaoth; may your power emerge from* NN *until you scare away this unclean demon satan, who is upon him or her.* I adjure you out, demon, whoever you are, by this God: SABARBARBATHIŌTH SABARBARBATHIOUTH SABARBARBATHIŌNĒTH SABARBARBAPHAI. Leave, demon, whoever you are, and stay away from NN, now, now; at once, at once. Leave, demon, as I chain you with unbreakable adamantine chains and commit you to the black chaos in perdition."

Method of Preparation: Take up 7 olive branches. Tie together the top and bottom end of each of the first six. Whip with the last one while you perform the adjuration. Keep it secret; this is effective.

When you have performed the expulsion, fasten on NN a protective amulet. A patient should put on this amulet after the expulsion of the demon, [with] these things on a tin metal leaf: BŌR PHŌR PHORBA PHOR PHORBA BES CHARIN BAUBŌ TE PHŌR BŌRPHORBA PHORBABOR BAPHORBA PHABRAIĒ PHŌRBA PHARBA PHŌ RPHŌR PHORBA BŌPHOR PHORBA PHORPHOR PHORBA BŌBORBORBA PAMPHORBA PHŌRPHŌR PHŌRBA, protect NN.

Introduction and translation by Thomas Fabisiak

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AUMA, ALICE

Alice Auma was a spiritual healer and medium from Uganda who claimed to have channeled "Lakwena," the spirit of a deceased army officer from Italy. Lakwena told her she must lead a rebel army to defeat the government headed up by President Yoweri Museveni. She called her group the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) and, from that point on, went by the name of Alice Lakwena.

Auma was born in 1956 of Acholi heritage, which is the predominant ethnicity in the northern part of Uganda. Her father was a priest. When she was six years old, Uganda gained its independence from Great Britain, but the country has since been torn apart by numerous military coups. According to Uganda's *Daily Monitor*, Auma was illiterate; she found work as a fish and flour vendor and, according to some, as a prostitute. At some point, she became Roman Catholic. She married twice but had no children.

A turning point in her life occurred on January 29, 1986, when Museveni overthrew the government of Milton Obote, who was from northern Uganda. On May 25, 1986, she was said to lose her ability to speak or hear. Her father met with eleven different witches looking for a cure, but none was found. She then headed into the Paraa National Park, emerging 40 days later with the news of Lakwena's spirit, a name that means "messenger" in Acholi. Lakwena—the Italian soldier—allegedly spoke 74 languages and drowned in the Nile during World War I, and his spirit was said to have consulted with forest animals before guiding Auma to action. Auma said that on August 6, 1986, he ordered her to form the HSM. Aims of the group included ushering in the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Auma put together a band of followers who achieved two unanticipated victories over Museveni's government forces, which added to her popularity and support. Each unit of her army had a spiritual controller who took care of Auma while she was channeling and who covered soldiers with holy oil that was believed to turn bullets into water if the soldiers' souls were pure. Auma blessed stones, which her followers believed turned them into grenades.

In July 1987, in Opit, the rebels were badly beaten in battle. Surviving

soldiers were described as being in a trance. Items found on the battlefield included models of grenades and helicopters, dead cats and live chameleons, Bibles, and a flower-covered altar. Auma and her army continued their fight and, in August 1987, they swayed and sang hymns as they marched south in cross-shaped formations as they approached the capital, Kampala. Government forces defeated them when they were approximately 130 kilometers from the capital, with thousands of northern soldiers dying when southern forces used machine guns. After that defeat, it was believed that Lakwena's spirit left Auma's body, so she fled, allegedly on a bicycle, to northeastern Kenya. She was put in prison, but later released into a refugee camp. Some say that Lakwena then inhabited the body of her father, Severino Lukoya.

Meanwhile, Auma's cousin (or perhaps nephew) Joseph Kony reorganized rebel forces into the United Holy Salvation Army, later named the Uganda Christian Army and then, in 1992, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA has caused as many as 1.5 million people to flee the region and, over a period of two decades, thousands of children have been kidnapped by the LRA to either become fighters or sex slaves. Kony, a former altar boy, has named the following spirits as his guides: Major Bianca, King Bruce, and Silver. Kony has said that he wanted to follow the ten commandments of the Bible and create a new generation of Acholis.

In November 2004, the *Daily Monitor* reported that Auma was implicated in trafficking children. In 2006, she claimed to have found a cure for HIV/AIDS. Other spirits said to inhabit Auma in her lifetime include America's Wrong Element, Zaire's Franko, and an Acholi nurse named Hyaker. Until her death, she continued to have a few devoted followers who believed in her ability to cure illnesses; she sat on a wooden throne when she met with them. Auma died in the Ifo refugee camp in northern Kenya at the age of 50 on January 17, 2007.

Kelly Boyer Sagert

See also: Channeling

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AUTOMATIC WRITING

Automatic writing refers to the phenomenon of a person entering a state of trance and writing or drawing messages allegedly from the spirit world. The phenomenon emerged out of Spiritualism, the American religious movement where mediums claimed to communicate with the dead. It was one of the earliest ways spirits communicated through mediums. Through automatic writing, messages, letters, stories, and even novels were transmitted from the spirit world. Charles Hammond, an early Spiritualist medium, in 1852, described automatic writing as follows: "When the spirit desires to communicate it will write without aid, to do which it is sometimes found necessary to impress on the mind of the medium the word intended to be written. When the impression is made the hand will be moved to write the word as it is impressed on the mind…. Some will be moved to write without impressions they will write slower than others until they can be impressed." In most cases automatic writings were produced by one medium using a pencil. In a minority of cases, writing was produced with the use of a planchette, a small board, usually heart shaped, resting on pegs or wheels, and containing a pencil that wrote when moved. When planchettes were employed, two people were necessary as they would both place their fingers on the board, and it was claimed to move without the aid of the individuals. Today, pencilless planchettes are used with Ouija boards.

After its emergence, automatic drawing and writing became one of the most common phenomena of Western mediums. Under trance, mediums produced spirit drawings, messages to individuals, essays about social reform, and even descriptions of how the spirit world appeared. Some of the most significant automatic writings produced in Spiritualism include the works of Andrew Jackson Davis, considered the theological father of Spiritualism, and W. Stainton Moses's *Spiritual Teachings* (1883). Additionally, some Spiritualists claimed that automatic writing was not new and that the Bible demonstrated cases of it. They cited Bible verses such as 1 Chronicles 28:19: "All this," David said, "I have in writing as a result of the

Lord's hand on me, and he enabled me to understand all the details of the plan" (NIV) and 2 Kings 21:12, where Jehoram receives a written communication from Elijah the prophet after the prophet has died (2 Kings 13:20). To this they added that the Bible contained mention of other Spiritualist phenomena, some going so far as to call Jesus a medium.

One of the biggest contentions mediums struggled against was the accusation of fraud. Whenever they claimed that they had received a message from the spirit world, an essay, drawing, or any other artistic creation, mediums were accused of lying and creating the work themselves. Indeed, it was difficult for mediums to disavow authorship when they were the only people who heard or were influenced by the spirits. In many cases, however, the writings of mediums contained private information the medium was unlikely to know. Revelations of private information were one of the primary ways mediums countered claims of fraud.

However, by the 1880s and 1890s, new theories began to develop that challenged the otherworldly source of the writings. Psychical research societies, in both Great Britain and America, began researching Spiritualist phenomena and suggested alternative possibilities. Some claimed that subtle suggestions or hypnotism could be involved. Others invoked the language of psychology and began to ascribe the writings to the unconscious mind of the authors. This later explanation was popular as it both disavowed the supernatural but also spared the author from claims of conscious fraud. By the beginning of the 20th century, the supernatural sources of automatic writing were generally dismissed, and psychology was used as an explanation of the phenomenon. These explanations, however, failed to account for the ways mediums were able to relay messages that contained unknown details, privy only to the individual for whom the message was intended. But such details were ignored in the rush to move the phenomenon from the realm of the supernatural to the realm of the rational and sensible.

Finally, automatic writing is distinguished from a less common phenomenon called direct writing. In direct writing, messages from spirits directly manipulate the writing instrument with no human contact involved or write messages without the use of a writing instrument. One of the most common forms of direct writing was called slate writing in which the medium would bind two blank slates or chalkboards together with a stick of chalk in between. Upon unbinding, the slates would have messages written on them from the spirits. This method of communication was also prone to

accusations of fraud and was a frequent subject of investigation by psychical researchers.

John L. Crow

See also: Channeling; Ouija Board; Spiritualism

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AZAZEL

The word “azazel” appears in the Jewish Tanakh/Christian Old Testament only in the book of Leviticus (Lev. 16:8, 10 [x2], 26). While the exact meaning of the word is uncertain, it may refer to the title of an ancient demon. Within the biblical context, “azazel” is associated with ancient Israelite rituals performed on the annual Day of Atonement as prescribed in Leviticus 16. According to these texts, the priest is to cast lots on two goats before the LORD at the tent of meeting; one lot is “for the LORD” and the other is “for Azazel” (Lev. 16:7–8). One goat is then offered to the Israelite deity as a sin offering, while the second goat is sent into the wilderness “for azazel” after the LORD makes atonement over it (Lev. 16:10). Subsequently, the one who sent the “azazel” goat free is contaminated and must be purified before returning to the Israelite camp (Lev. 10:26). Although “azazel” is not clearly defined in the text, underlying the entire ritual now found in Leviticus 16 is the notion that the animal somehow carries away the wrongdoings of the Israelites and so atones for them.

There are several options for the possible etymology of the word “azazel.” The common English translation “scapegoat” reflects the various translations of the Hebrew in both the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, which overall understood “azazel” to be the combination of two Hebrew words: *‘ez* (“goat”) and *‘azal* (“to go away”)—“the goat that goes away.” Alternatively, the term may reflect the geographical location to which the goat was sent. For instance, rabbinic interpretations understood the word to mean something like a “rocky precipice” (see Tg. Ps.-J; b. Yoma 63a).

Later, the Mishnah records how the goat was to be taken to a cliff and pushed off (b. Yoma 6). Yet another theory proposes that the word is an abstract noun, meaning "destruction" or "entire removal." Finally, a popular understanding posits that "azazel" is the proper name of a demon or supernatural being familiar to the ancient Israelites. One argument for this is that the term is placed parallel to the proper name of the Israelite deity: one goat is offered "for Yahweh" (translated as "for the LORD" in most English language Bibles), and the second goat is offered "for Azazel" (Lev. 16:8). Thus, scholars suggest that "azazel" may be the name of a demon associated with the wilderness. While there is no known demon called "Azazel" in any ancient Near Eastern texts, scholars have explained the presence of the demon's name in a variety of ways: it may be connected to the *se'erim*, or "goat-demons," of Leviticus 17:7; Isaiah 13:21, and 34:14, it may reflect how the ancient Israelites attempted to downplay and denigrate Mot, the Canaanite god of death, or it may reflect ancient Near Eastern purification rites where various evils (such as plagues) were metaphorically expelled into the wilderness. If the word is the name of a once known demon, in its current literary setting the "azazel" has been thoroughly integrated into the biblical context, and the final form of the text does not depict the "azazel" as either powerful or as the recipient of a slaughtered sacrificial animal.

Azazel, second order of demon, guardian of goats, from *Infernal Dictionary* by Collin de Plancy, 1793–1887, French writer and occultist, first published 1825, illustration by Louis Breton, 1863. (Kharbine-Tapabor/The Art Archive at Art Resource)

In later apocryphal literature Azazel does appear as a personified fallen angel. For example, the book of Enoch identifies him as one of the angelic leaders responsible for the corruption of humans, explaining that Azazel taught humanity how to make weapons (among other things), which leads to humanity's downfall (1 En. 8:1). Enoch also records how the archangel Raphael binds Azazel and buries him in the desert to await the Day of Judgment (1 En. 10:4–6; also see 1 En. 9:6; 13:1; 54:1–6; 55:4; 69:2) Likewise, the Apocalypse of Abraham depicts Azazel as a fallen angel (and as an unclean bird, an evil spirit, and a snake-like being that tempts Adam and Eve; see Apoc. Abr. 13:6–14; 14:4–6; 22:6; 23:5, 9). Later interpreters continue to debate how to best understand the term. For instance, in Jewish tradition, Maimonides understands Leviticus 16 allegorically rather than literally, claiming the text is symbolic and intended to encourage its readers to repent (*Guide for the Perplexed* 3.46). In later Christian tradition Tertullian understands the two goats to prefigure the two natures of Christ (in other words, that Christ was both human and divine; see *Against Marcion* 3.7.7), while Origen suggests that Azazel is the devil (*On First Principles* 3.2.1).

Kelly J. Murphy

See also: Judaism

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B

BA’AL SHEM TOV

Israel ben Eliezer (c. 1700–1760), also known by the honorific Ba’al Shem Tov, meaning Master of the Good Name, or by its abbreviated Hebrew acronym *Besht*, is regarded as the founder of the modern Hasidism, a mystical-revivalist Jewish movement that emerged in the middle of the 18th century in present-day Ukraine. The teachings of the Ba’al Shem Tov center on the concept of *deveykus* meaning an intense attachment to God. This attachment could be achieved through sincere prayer and the realization of the divine presence throughout the world. The Ba’al Shem Tov preached a sort of pantheistic conception of the world, whereby the divine is present in all people and objects. This emphasis on the divine presence should not give the impression that the Ba’al Shem Tov undervalued the importance of Judaism’s sacred texts. Instead, he believed that scriptural study was an ideal way to cultivate a strong relationship with the divine. The teachings of the Ba’al Shem Tov were complemented by his mystical aura. It was believed that the Ba’al Shem Tov possessed a host of miraculous powers, including the ability to perform exorcisms. One prominent story revolves around the Ba’al Shem Tov and a woman possessed by a demon. Upon encountering the Ba’al Shem Tov, the demon threatened to reveal the Ba’al Shem Tov’s true identity before the appointed time mandated by God. However, the Ba’al Shem Tov quickly scolded the demon and shortly exorcised him from the woman. In another instance, a demon was terrorizing a leaseholder’s home. The Ba’al Shem Tov decided to visit the house, but the demon manifested itself as a large and imposing figure. However, as the Ba’al Shem Tov approached the house, the size of this figure gradually began to diminish until it disappeared completely. The mystical aura that revolved around the Ba’al Shem Tov did not begin in his adult years but rather can be traced to before his birth.

There are several hagiographical accounts that surround the prophetic birth of the Ba’al Shem Tov. One of the more popular accounts revolves around the Prophet Elijah. The parents of the Ba’al Shem Tov were elderly and childless. However, despite their situation, the couple were renowned for

their generosity. In one instance, the Prophet Elijah, in the vestige of a Jewish vagabond, arrived in the couple's home. It was clear to the couple that this vagabond broke the commandment not to travel on the Sabbath, but despite his transgression, the couple did not castigate their guest. In concert with their generous demeanor, the couple provided for his every need. Shortly thereafter, the visitor revealed himself to be the Prophet Elijah and praised the couple for their virtuous behavior. The Prophet Elijah then informed the couple that for their magnanimity, they will be blessed with a son named Israel.

The prophesized child was born in Okopy, a town in modern Ukraine. The Ba'al Shem Tov received little from his parents, but before his father died, he implored his young son to fear nothing but God. In his early years, the Ba'al Shem Tov held a host of different occupations. In time, the Ba'al Shem Tov departed Okopy for Brody, a nearby town in modern Ukraine. In Brody, the Ba'al Shem Tov became associated with a prominent rabbinical family through his arranged marriage. The couple were then married but lived in poverty in the Carpathian Mountains. This lifestyle was appreciated by the Ba'al Shem Tov, who used this time for meditation. During this period, it is reported that the Ba'al Shem Tov was under the tutelage of the Prophet Ahijah. This period of isolation eventually came to an end marking the greatest turning point in the life of the Ba'al Shem Tov.

The 36th year of the Ba'al Shem Tov's life is regarded as the year of the revelation or *hithgalluth*. It is at this time that the Ba'al Shem Tov formally began his ministry of spiritual guidance and physical healing. The Ba'al Shem Tov's knowledge was diverse from providing individuals with *kameyos* or special amulets to medical remedies. In 1740 or 1745, the Ba'al Shem Tov moved to Medzhibozh, a city in the western Ukraine. Medzhibozh is where the Ba'al Shem Tov continued to teach. In his teachings, the Ba'al Shem Tov employed simple stories and anecdotes, often with a joy-filled flavor rather than complex philosophical arguments and authoritative commandments. In addition to the Ba'al Shem Tov's parables, he also made the esoteric concepts of *Kabbalah* or the Jewish mystical tradition more accessible to the public by simplifying its intricate concepts. This populist approach to his ministry appears to be a hallmark of the Ba'al Shem Tov's legacy.

In 1760, the founder of modern Hasidism was laid to rest in his adopted town of Medzhibozh, with an unadorned tombstone marking his burial site. Despite having a living male relative, namely his son Rabbi Tzvi, the Ba'al

Shem Tov was eventually succeeded by the eminent Rabbi Dov Ber (c. 1704–1772) of Mezritch. In his life, the Ba'al Shem Tov had attracted several prominent disciples who, following their master's death, played an important role in disseminating his teachings. In the years following his death, the Ba'al Shem Tov's disciples decided to compile their master's oral traditions and publish them. The major works of the Ba'al Shem Tov include *The Praises of the Besht*, *The Crown of a Good Name*, and *Testament of Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov*. The lessons, parables, and teachings collected in these volumes continue to inspire countless Hasidic communities around the world from Eastern Europe to North America to the Middle East.

John Cappucci

See also: Judaism

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BACKMASKING

The general application of the term refers to subliminal messages buried within a studio recording during post-production. These reported messages can range from innocuous jokes and marketing ploys to satanic references and violent directives. Claims of subliminal control through backmasking re-imagine demonic possession in a pseudo-medical register. Some evangelical groups have warned that back-masking leaves the listener vulnerable to possession.

Following the fervor instigated by suspected messages within "Revolution 9" from the Beatles's self-titled "White Album" (1968), the emergence of occultist Anton LaVey (born Howard Levey, 1930–1997) and his *Satanic Bible* (1969), as well as scenes of a demon-possessed child

talking in reverse in *The Exorcist* (1973), backmasking became prominent in popular discourse. Popular rock songs met with scrutiny and panic; Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" (1971) was thought to contain satanic references, and later Ozzy Osbourne's "Suicide Solution" from *Blizzard of Ozz* (1980) allegedly inspired the suicide of a young listener. In the case of Osbourne, the claims were disputed, and the resulting legal proceedings were eventually dismissed.

Singer Robert Plant (on right) and guitarist Jimmy Page (playing a Gibson Les Paul electric guitar) of the rock band Led Zeppelin perform onstage in 1976. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

During a talk show on the Praise The Lord (PTL) network in 1982, William H. Yarroll (n.d.), a self-described "neuro-scientific researcher," argued that rock musicians were members of the Church of Satan and concealed satanic messages within their songs to influence impressionable listeners. He also stated that these messages were recorded in reverse and at different speeds than the host recording, which would allow them to enter a listener's subconscious without his/her awareness. These allegations drew the attention of state representative Phil Wyman (R-Calif., b. 1945), who introduced legislation in 1983 to protect unsuspecting consumers. Following a frenzy of media attention, numerous music scholars, psychologists, audiologists, and even artists themselves argued and debunked many of these

accusations. The issue has since evolved into a campaign against gratuitous sex and violence glamorized by rock lyrics and music videos, culminating in the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) Senate hearings of 1985.

Michael Yonchak

See also: Music, Popular

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BALI

The island of Bali is located eight degrees south of the equator and about eighteen degrees north of the western side of Australia. Bali is one of 13,000 islands that make up the archipelago of Indonesia. It has a dry season and a wet season but maintains its warm temperature year round. The Balinese were converted to Hinduism by the Javanese, who colonized it in the 14th century. The land remained relatively untouched until 1846 when it was colonized by the Dutch. Despite the invasion and a subsequent colonization by Japan, it remained relatively autonomous in terms of culture and religion. In 1945 Bali became a province of the Independent Indonesian Republic. The present-day capital, Denpasar, was established and Bali divided into eight districts, or *kabupaten*, which maintain distinct traditions and local practices. The majority of Balinese practice a unique form of Hinduism that is known for its elaborate rituals and elements of trance and possession. Balinese Hinduism originates from four distinct sources: animism and ancestor worship, Indian Hinduism, Tantric Buddhism and *adat*, or local law.

Balinese culture is often characterized by its elaborate festivals, celebrations, and ceremonies. On these occasions the Balinese, adorned with flowers, silks, brocades and jewelry, walk the streets in procession behind orchestras of bells, gongs, and drums. During these festivals and ceremonies, social norms shift, and intense emotions are expressed through dance, plays,

and puppet shows. A function of these festivals is to occasion trance states, which allow community members to become possessed by gods or ancestors who speak through them. Information that is released by the spirits often predicts the future or helps in managing disputes, environmental problems, and illness. Anthropologists have observed that everyday codes, such as the propensity to avoid excessive displays of emotion, are suspended during these events suggesting that trance and possession may have psychological as well as spiritual functions.

The ethnographic data that were collected by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in 1942 have been a stepping-stone for all researchers interested in Balinese trance thereafter. Although Mead and Bateson do not explicitly have this aim, there is a discernible psychoanalytic influence in their approach. For example, Mead was particularly interested in the various personality structures that might determine the likelihood of children to easily fall into trance or become spirit mediums.

For the Balinese, ancestor spirits and gods are part of the natural order of life. When a baby is born, parents often take them to a *Balian Matuun* (spirit medium) who can identify particular ancestral connections the child brings into this life. The mediums may become possessed in such encounters and instruct parents to make specific offerings, such as puppet performances or a pig roast to purify negative *karma* accrued in past lives. Newborn babies are held without their feet touching the ground until their 105th day of life, when they also receive a name; before this, they are considered too close to godly realms to descend into the ordinary or "profane" world of human beings. Likewise, as people age, they begin their ascent into a more spiritual state of personhood. The Balinese have an intimate relationship with the spirit realm, and use ritual and trance for communication with gods and demons.

During possession there is an immediate and often dramatic change in facial expression, voice, personality, and behavior. Whereas Balinese society promotes a rather demure and composed affect, entranced individuals often cry, yell, jump about, or even fall into seizures or other unconscious states in violent fashions. Anthropologists such as Jane Belo, as well as Bateson and Mead, describe those in trance states as exhibiting an "awayness." In this "awayness" from everyday reality, the dramatic displays of emotion are understood to be the god's, and not those of the human being. The *gamelan* (orchestra) instruments swell, and the crowd joins in with rhythmic chanting. Some will put on masks, "becoming" the god. In her fieldwork, Belo

identified seven types of individuals who go into trance: trance doctors, ceremonial mediums, impersonators of the *Rangda* (the witch) and *Barong* (the dragon), fighting and self-stabbing trancers, occasional trancers, child trance dancers, and folk trancers.

The concept of health in Bali is known as *segar*, which according to the anthropologist, Unni Wikan, is dependent on three factors: (1) *buana alit* (microcosmos), which is made up of individual persons; (2) *buana agung* (macrocosmos), which comprises the universe; and (3) *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa* (supreme God). The Balinese strive to keep these three factors in delicate equilibrium. Illness occurs when individuals are out of sync in body and mind, or with their environment; inner and outer environments are deeply connected. For example, the Balinese do not believe it is possible to have a "sick" mind and a "well" body. Trance practitioners often recommend ways that those with problems might restore the balance within themselves and within the natural world.

That some practitioners become possessed to treat patients (who may also be possessed) illustrates the importance of context. In Bali, spirit possession can be helpful or harmful; it can cause illness as well as aid in diagnosing others. If the state of religious ecstasy is a true trance state, these individuals may be invited to join an established group of mediums connected with a particular temple. The mediums ask the gods whether the individual in question is worthy of joining the group. If the god's utterance (spoken through another community member in trance) is favorable, the individual often becomes a regular trance practitioner.

In 1990, Unni Wikan published an ethnographic monograph that challenged much of the previous work on Balinese trance, which she characterized as romanticized and overly general. Wikan also challenges those who claim that possession is the cultural formation of a dissociative disorder. More recent scholarship with in the social sciences, such as Suryani and Jensen's, opposes early researchers like Mead and Belo who suggested that illness (often mental illness) predicted initiation into mediumship. These more recent studies demonstrate that although certain behaviors associated with Balinese trance may resemble dissociative disorders, individuals who become practitioners tend not to be mentally ill—in fact, they are often among the most adept in the community.

Sara Lewis

See also: Buddhism; Dissociative Identity Disorder; Hinduism; Tantra

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BAPTISM

Baptism is a rite of admission and initiation among Christians that often symbolizes entry into a church tradition. Among some Christian churches, a rite of exorcism is included as part of baptism or serves a role in the preparations. In Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and a number of mainline Protestant churches, the basic requirements for baptism are a cleansing in water and a Trinitarian formula, often "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Baptism can also include ritual laying on of hands, use of holy oil, wearing of a special garment, and inclusion of other sacramentals.

The English word "baptism" comes from the biblical Greek term *baptisma* (literally "washing-ism") that was coined from the Greek word for ritual washing *baptismos* that can be found in the Septuagint. *Baptismos* is seen within writings of Hellenistic Judaism during the Second Temple Period in reference to ritual washing and in the New Testament for both ritual washing as well as the ceremony known as baptism. Baptism can be compared to the Jewish purification practice of *tvilah*. The subject is ritually immersed in flowing (natural) water in a process called a "*mikvah*" to be made ritually pure for entering Holy Temple. Unlike baptism, which except for a few notable exceptions can only be administered once, the *mikvah* can be repeated when the recipient has again grown unclean according to Jewish laws and tradition.

Christian baptism was a core element of the ministry of Jesus Christ and is mentioned throughout the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline epistles. The itinerant preacher John the Baptist baptized his followers in the River

Jordan in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah, and, along with serving as the forerunner of Jesus in ministry, he baptized Jesus in the Jordan. In the Gospel of Mark, the baptism of Jesus is the occasion of the Theophany or the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God. While it is a matter of scholarly debate whether Jesus personally performed baptisms during his ministry, a passage in John 4:2 establishes that “although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples.” The Great Commission, where the resurrected Jesus calls upon his disciples to spread his teachings throughout the world, served as the occasion in the Gospel of Matthew where He commanded, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The Great Commission not only provides the occasion for the missionary, apostolic expansion of the Christian religion, but also the very words of the rite. Through the elaboration of the Pauline epistles, baptism came to represent a death of the old self, a remission of sin, personal salvation, an adoption as “sons of God,” and solidarity with the life and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

It is generally agreed that the earliest Christians conducted baptisms through total immersion with preference for “living” or flowing water, such as a river or a stream. A standing tradition among biblical archaeologists of the 19th century was that the early Christian rite of baptism was performed by both the minister and the recipient standing in water, the minister placing his right hand on the head of the recipient and intoning the words of baptism while inclining him or her into the water. Archaeologists have unearthed examples of large, deep fonts capable of full immersion as well as more shallow examples, akin to ones seen in modern churches. Historical opinion, however, is not uniform on how the rite was performed, and it is suggested that partial immersion and pouring were also contemporary with the earliest Christians.

Baptism near Mineola, Texas, 1935. Photo by folklorist Alan Lomax. (Library of Congress)

The theology behind baptism gained much of its modern meaning and ceremony by the end of the fourth century. This was in part a response to the Pelagian heresy, which contested the doctrine of original sin. The time of the rite was expanded with weeks of devout instruction and preparation often culminating in baptism at Easter. The Creed would be recited on Holy Saturday and on the Paschal Vigil (the evening of Holy Saturday) the catechumens were anointed with holy oil, renounced the devil and his works, and professed their faith in the Holy Trinity. In early Christianity, it was common to postpone baptism until later in life or even death, such that the cleansing nature of the rite not be sullied by a lived life. The Emperor Constantine delayed his baptism until death, as did many Roman patricians of his day. The balance between infant and adult baptism slowly shifted in the centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire. By the dawn of the Middle Ages, the baptism of Christian children became more common than those of adult catechumens.

The practice of exorcising catechumens (those who are undergoing a course of preparation for entering the church) dates to the earliest period of Christianity. An exorcism was included not because the recipient was considered actively possessed or demoniac, but rather was included because the catechumen was under the power of Original Sin, a doctrine that assigned

a primal sin or offense born within all humans as the consequence of the temptation and fall from the Garden of Eden. Saint Augustine of Hippo used the practice of exorcising infants at baptism as an example to refute the claims of the Pelagians and affirm the doctrine of Original Sin. Augustine upheld baptism as necessary even for the seemingly most virtuous of men. Further, in the case of adult baptism it was assumed that the catechumen would have other sins from his or her life. In their bonds of sin the one receiving baptism was thus considered in the power of the devil, whose influence the baptized was explicitly asked to reject.

Exorcism originally served as part of the preparation for the catechumen to receive baptism. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem described baptismal exorcism with holy oil occurring in the Christian East during the fourth century. This practice was also affirmed in the Arabic Canons of Saint Hippolytus of Rome in the third century. The ancient rite included the action of *Exsufflatio* and *Insufflatio*. Exsufflatio or "out-breathing" of the demon occurs when the recipient rejects the "pomps" or "works" of the devil. Similarly, Insufflatio or "in-breathing" is completed by the minister symbolically infusing sanctifying grace into the recipient (in older Catholic tradition by literally breathing on the face). Both practices remain within the extraordinary form (pre-1962 "Latin" rites) of the Catholic baptism as well as, in differing forms, in contemporary Catholic practice.

Sean P. Phillips

See also: Holy Water

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BELL WITCH, THE

The Bell Witch was a legendary haunting with poltergeist aspects alleged to have occurred from 1817 to 1821 and again in 1828 at the farm of John Bell (1750–1820), near Adams (formerly Adams Station), Tennessee. The so-called "witch" was thought at different times to be an evil spirit, the spirit of a deceased person, or the spirit of a living witch. Several versions of the legend exist, notably the Goodspeed Publishing Company's *History of Tennessee* (1886), the longer and differing account of Martin Ingram (1894), and an oral tradition later published by Arthur Palmer Hudson and Pete McCarter (1934). The Ingram version involved an attempted exorcism of the "witch" using magic.

Goodspeed

John Bell is described as having settled near Adams Station around 1804. The haunting is undated, but it is named as the "Bell Witch" and said to have attracted great interest at the time. Portrayed as an invisible supernatural being able to talk and shake people's hands, a variety of nuisances were ascribed to it, including removing sugar from the sugar bowl, spilling milk, pulling quilts from the beds, slapping and pinching children, and laughing at the results of its tricks.

Ingram

Also situating events near Adams Station, Ingram compiled his account from a so-called diary he claimed was written by John Bell's son Richard Williams Bell (c.1811–1857) in 1846 and from additional material. According to this, events began with unexplained noises, developing into more dramatic presentations, such as human voices, poltergeist-type phenomena, apports (objects appearing spontaneously), mysterious lights, and apparitions.

When questioned the presumed spirit was able to communicate, initially with raps and scratches, and then with a human voice. Several identities were assumed, progressing from (a) the spirit of a person searching for a missing tooth; (b) the spirit of an early settler; (c) the spirit of a child buried in North Carolina; (d) the "witch" of a neighbor's stepmother; to (e) "Old Kate Batts's witch." Four additional personas —Blackdog, Mathematics, Cypocryphy, and Jerusalem—the so-called "witch family," also manifested.

The spirit exhibited different feelings for family members: it never harassed John's wife Lucy; it claimed to like their daughter Elizabeth (Betsy), although enjoyed tormenting her; and expressed hatred towards John. Both Betsy and John exhibited physical symptoms. Betsy suffered from fainting spells and hyperventilation. John experienced swelling of his tongue and facial contortions that increased in severity. John died on December 20, 1820, apparently poisoned by the "witch." The "witch" left in the spring of 1821, promising to return in seven years. This apparently happened in February 1828 with the "witch" staying for two weeks.

Hudson-McCarter

Hudson and McCarter consolidated their "Mississippi" version from several oral retellings that notably begin the story in North Carolina. Here John Bell was said to be a successful plantation owner. Bell allegedly killed his overseer, Simon Legree, resulting in mysterious crop failure, livestock deaths, and financial ruin. He then moved to Bell, Tennessee, supposedly named after him. Here the poltergeist activity commenced with a slave informing him that the spirit of Legree was responsible. Emphasis is placed on the spirit's prodigious consumption of food, especially milk and cream.

The spirit professed to be in love with the daughter, here called Mary, and frightened off living rivals. The Bell family tried, unsuccessfully, to escape by moving to Panola County, Mississippi. John and the spirit had a final argument over the spirit's desire to marry Mary. Inexplicably, Mary pined away. Just before dying, she saw the once invisible spirit and decided that she could love him.

Leo Ruickbie

See also: Spiritualism

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BENEDICT MEDAL

The Medal of Saint Benedict, also called the Cross or Medal-Cross of Saint Benedict, is a medal incorporating the picture of Saint Benedict and associated imagery and lettering. Incorporating imagery and themes from the patristic and medieval period, the medal itself seems to have circulated only since the 17th century. Various significances are attached to the medal, one of which is protection against the devil and his influence.

Saint Benedict (480–543 AD) used the sign of the cross repeatedly to ward off evil influences, including an assassination attempt. The Benedictine monastic movement, which he began, continued to use this symbol, including relics of the true cross. Pope Leo IX testified to having received a vision of St. Benedict himself touching him with a cross, which cured him of a reptile's poison in 1049. There is little evidence that religious medals were used before 1390, so the medal is unlikely to have been used before that date. The earliest appearance of a medal with this particular symbolism (a picture of St. Benedict, accompanied by the cross) is in 1664, when an anonymous Benedictine monk at Salzburg describes such a medal. In 1742 it received formal ecclesiastical approval when Pope Benedict XIV authorized a religious blessing, after which certain indulgences were always attached to it.

In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the medal grew in popularity and spread from Germany to Italy and France, where it became associated with numerous miracles, including healings, conversions, and exorcisms. In most of these cases the medal was either worn on the person, hung from doors or windows, or buried in the foundations of buildings. In 1665 several exorcisms in France were performed on possessed persons by having them drink water from a cup in which the medal had been dipped. Around the same time, several buildings, where extraordinary phenomena associated with demonic possession had been known to occur, were sanitized by hanging the medal over their doors. In the mid-19th century, several cases of Spiritualist activity in France were allegedly disrupted by persons wearing the medal.

The appearance of the medal varies and can have diverse characteristics: as small as a dime or as large as a quarter, with a shape that can be round, oval, oblong, or even square, and with a cross of differing styles. The only consistent symbols are a picture of St. Benedict, a cross of some sort, and Latin lettering. Typically the lettering includes the following sequences:

- C.S.P.B. (*Crux Sancti Patris Benedicti*, or “The Cross of Our Holy Father Benedict”)
- *Eius in obitu nostro paesentia muniamur* (“May we be strengthened by his presence in the hour of our death”)
- C.S.S.M.L. – N.D.S.M.D. (*Crux sacra sit mihi lux, Nunquam draco sit mihi dux*, or “May the holy cross be my light, may the dragon never be my guide”)
- V.R.S.N.S.M.V. – S.M.Q.L.I.V.B. (*Vade retro Satana! Nunquam suade mihi vana! Sunt mala quae libas. Ipse venena bibas*!, or “Begone Satan! Never tempt me with your vanities! What you offer me is evil. Drink the poison yourself!”)

The last lettering sequence is a minor exorcism formula, the meaning of which remained a mystery for some centuries, having been forgotten even by those who promoted the medal. In 1647 in Bavaria, certain witches accused of sorcery confessed in their trial that their witchcraft was rendered ineffective in the environs of a nearby monastery, where a later search turned up the lettering sequence above accompanied by a cross, painted on an exterior wall. The monks at this monastery, however, could not recall the meaning or origin of the lettering. Only later did a search through the monastic library unearth a 1415 manuscript that included a sketch of St. Benedict holding a cross, with the full Latin exorcism written on scrolls surrounding him.

In 1880, to mark the 1,400th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict, the Jubilee Medal of Montecassino was struck, which has since become the most common version of the St. Benedict medal, which incorporates all of the features mentioned above, and which is distinguishable by the mark of its place and date of origin, “*Ex S. M. Cassino MDCCCLXXX*.” The Jubilee Medal, which admits of no variation in design, is associated with more indulgences than the other versions of the medal, which in their turn can vary significantly in design.

The Medal of St. Benedict is widely available in stores that supply Catholic jewelry and religious items. It is worn not only by those associated with the Benedictine order, but by many Catholic laity. It is often blessed with a specific prayer formula, which may be said by any priest, and which

may be found in many books of blessings and devotional manuals. It is often worn around the neck, or affixed to a rosary, or buried in the foundations of buildings as a means of protection against evil.

Benjamin P. Blosser

See also: Catholicism

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BENTRESH STELA, THE

The Bentresh Stela (also called the Bakhtan/Bekhten Stela) narrates the possession of Princess Bentresh, daughter of the prince of Bakhtan. Bentresh had fallen ill and required the healing power of the Egyptian lunar god Khonsu, celebrated for his protection against possessing demons. While the text of the Bentresh Stela sets its narrative during the reign of Ramsses II, most scholars date its origin to the Persian or early Ptolemaic Period (fourth century BCE).

The Bentresh Stela is a hieroglyphic text consisting of twenty-eight lines carved into black sandstone, measuring 2.22 x 1.09 m. It was discovered in 1829 in a Ptolemic sanctuary adjacent to the Temple of Khonsu in Karnak. The Stela was transported to Paris in 1844 and now stands in the Louvre Museum (C 284). A second, unpublished version of Bentresh's possession was discovered in Luxor by the Oriental Institute in 1978–1979. This account, inscribed upon 35 blocks, contains a significantly shorter version of Bentresh's story.

Alongside the hieroglyphics, the Stela includes a lunette depicting two figures offering incense to two manifestations of Khonsu. In the foreground, Ramesses II offers incense before the image of the god Khons-in-Thebes-Neferhotep. Behind the pharaoh, a priest offers incense before the image of Khons-the-Authority.

In the Stela, the prince of Bakhtan (perhaps an Egyptian rendering of the historical Bactria), sends a message to Ramesses II, asking for a physician to heal his daughter Bentresh, who is the younger sister of Ramesses's Queen Neferure (perhaps referencing Thutmose IV's Hittite wife, Maat-Neferure). According to the prince of Bakhtan, a malady has seized his daughter's body. Upon examination of Ramesses sister-in-law, Ramesses's physician, Thothemheb, confirms that Bentresh has been possessed by a demon. Following this confirmation, the officials from the Temple of Khonsu send a portable image of the god to the princess Bentresh. Khons-in-Thebes-Neferhotep gives magical protection to Khons-the-Authority for his long journey and the successful expulsion of the demon. Khons-the-Authority travels a year and five months to Bakhtan, flanked by five boats, a chariot, and horses. Upon arrival, the god immediately finds the young princess at the palace, makes a magical protection, and the princess instantly heals.

After its expulsion, the spirit addresses Khons-the-Authority with salutation and praise for the god's wondrous deed in Bakhtan (lines 19–23). Furthermore, the spirit courteously avows to return to the place from which he came. Finally, the spirit invokes the Egyptian god to celebrate with him and the prince of Bakhtan. The prince of Bakhtan and his army, terrified by the appearance of the expelled spirit, make an offering to Khons-the-Authority. Immediately, the roaming spirit returns in peace to his proper location (presumably in the netherworld). The stela concludes when the Bakhtan prince returns Khonsu-the-Authority to its Temple in Egypt after a three-year period in which the prince selfishly withheld the statue for continued protection.

The precise purpose of the Bentresh Stela is unclear. Most likely, it was created as propaganda for the god Khonsu, his Temple and priests, and the portable divine image used in exorcism rituals. During the Third Intermediate Period (1060–664 BCE), the cult of Khonsu frequently issued decrees intended to protect one from spirit possession. The Bentresh Stela provides important evidence for historians of ancient Egypt. First, the Stela documents the practice of diplomatic marriage between Egypt and its diplomatic partners. Second, the Stela demonstrates that Egypt exchanged healing statues and physicians with allies. The relationship between Bakhtan and Egypt benefited from the diplomatic marriage alliance, as well as from the renowned powers of Khonsu's demon expulsion. Propaganda such as the state-sponsored Bentresh Stela surely advertised the power of the Egyptian

deity and the benefits of political alliances.

F. Dorie Mansen

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Related Primary Document: The Bentresh Stela (Egypt, Fourth Century BCE)

The Bentresh Stela narrates the possession and exorcism of Princess Bentresh, daughter of the prince of Bakhtan. In the story, Bentresh's sister is the wife of Ramsses II. The possessing spirit agrees to leave when a statue of the lunar god Khonsu (and the physical embodiment of the god) is sent to the city of Bakhtan. The document is a fascinating window into ancient Egyptian ideas about the nature of possessing spirits. (The translation below was published in 1906 and transliterates Egyptian names slightly differently from current archaeologists.)

Introduction

Horus: Mighty Bull, Likeness of Diadems, Abiding in Kingship, like Atum; Golden Horus: Mighty of Strength, Expelling the Nine Bows; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands: Usermare-Setepnere; Son of Re, of his Body: Ramses-Meriamon, beloved of Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, and all the gods of Thebes …

Tribute in Naharin

Lo, his majesty was in Naharin according to his yearly custom, while the chiefs of every country came bowing down in peace, because of the fame of his majesty. From the marshes was their tribute; silver, gold, lapiz lazuli, malachite and every sweet wood of God's-Land were upon their backs, each one leading his neighbor.

Marriage of Ramses and Chief of Bekhten's Daughter

Then the chief of Bekhten caused his tribute to be brought, and he placed his eldest daughter in front thereof, praising his majesty, and craving life from him. Now, she was exceedingly beautiful to the heart of his majesty, beyond everything. Then they affixed her titulary as: “Great King’s Wife, Nefrure.” When his majesty arrived in Egypt, she fulfilled all the functions of king’s-wife.

Arrival of the Messenger from Bekhten

When the year 23, the tenth month, the twenty-second day, came, while his majesty was in Thebes, the victorious, the mistress of cities, performing the pleasing ceremonies of his father, Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, at his beautiful feast of Southern Opet (Luxor), his favorite seat, of the beginning (of the world), came one to say to his majesty: “A messenger of the chief of Bekhten has come, bearing many gifts of the King’s Wife.” Then he was brought before his majesty together with his gifts. He said, praising his majesty: “Praise to thee, Sun of the Nine Bows! Give us life from thee.” So spake he, smelling the earth before his majesty. He spake again before his majesty: “I come to thee, O king, my lord, on account of Bentresh thy great sister of the King’s-Wife, Nefrure. Sickness has penetrated into her limbs. May thy majesty send a wise man to see her.”

Dispatch of the Wise Man to Bekhten

Then said his majesty: “Bring to me the sacred scribes and the officials of the court.” They were led to him immediately. Said his majesty: “Let one read to you, till ye hear this thing. Then bring to me one experienced in his heart, who can write with his fingers, from your midst.” The king’s scribe, Thutemhab, came before his majesty, and his majesty commanded that he go to Bekhten together with his messenger.

Arrival of the Wise Man in Bekhten

The wise man arrived in Bekhten; he found Bentresh in the condition of one possessed of a spirit. He found her unable to contend with him.

Message of the Chief of Bekhten to Ramses

The chief of Bekhten repeated in the presence of his majesty, saying: “O king, my lord, let his majesty command to have this god brought [… Here text has been lost between two fragments of the stela …]” Then the wise man whom his majesty had sent, returned to his majesty in the year 26, the ninth

month, at the feast of Amon, while his majesty was in Thebes.

Ramses' Interview with the Two Khonsu's

Then his majesty repeated (it) before Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beatiful-Rest, saying: "O my good lord, I repeated before thee concerning the daughter of the chief of Bekhten." Then they led Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest to Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker, the great god, smiting the evil spirits. Then said his majesty before Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest: "O thou good lord, if thou inclinest thy face to Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker, the great god, smiting the evil spirits, he shall be conveyed to Bekhten." There was violent nodding. Then said his majesty: "Send thy protection with him, that I may cause his majesty to go to Bekhten, to save the daughter of the chief of Bekhten." Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest nodded the head violently. Then he wrought the protection of Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes, four times.

Departure of Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker

His majesty commanded to cause Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes to proceed to a great ship, five transports, numerous chariots and horses of the west and the east.

Arrival of the God in Bekhten

This god arrived in Bekhten in a full year and five months. Then the chief of Bekhten came, with his soldiers and his nobles, before Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker. He threw himself upon his belly, saying, "Thou comest to us, thou art welcome with us, by command of the King Usermare-Stepnere (Ramses II)."

Cure of Bentresh

Then this god went to the place where Bentresh was. Then he wrought the protection of the daughter of the chief of Bekhten. She became well immediately.

Conciliation of the Spirit

Then said this spirit which was in her before Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes: "Thou comest in peace, thou great god, smiting the barbarians. Thy city is Bekhten, thy servants are its people, I am thy servant. I will go to the place whence I came, to satisfy thy heart concerning that, on account of which thou comest. (But) let thy majesty command to celebrate a feast-day with me and with the chief of Bekhten." Then his god nodded to his priest,

saying: “Let the chief of Bekhten make a great offering before this spirit.” While these things were happening, which Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes wrought with the spirit, the chief of Bekhten stood with his soldiers, and feared very greatly. Then he made a great offering before Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes and the spirit; and the chief of Bekhten celebrated a feast day with them. Then the spirit departed in peace to the place he desired, by command of Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes, and the chief of Bekhten rejoiced very greatly, together with every man who was in Bekhten.

Retention of the God in Bekhten

Then he took counsel with his heart, saying: “I will cause this god to remain with me in Bekhten; I will not permit that he return to Egypt.” Then this god tarried three years and nine months in Bekhten.

Vision of the Chief of Bekhten

Then the chief of Bekhten slept upon his bed, and he saw this god coming to him, to forsake his shrine; he was a hawk of gold, and he flew upward toward Egypt. He (the chief) awoke in fright.

Departure of the God for Egypt

Then he said to the priest of Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes: “This god, he is still with us; let him depart to Egypt; let his chariot depart to Egypt.” Then the chief of Bekhten caused this god to proceed to Egypt, and gave to him very many gifts of every good thing, very many soldiers and horses.

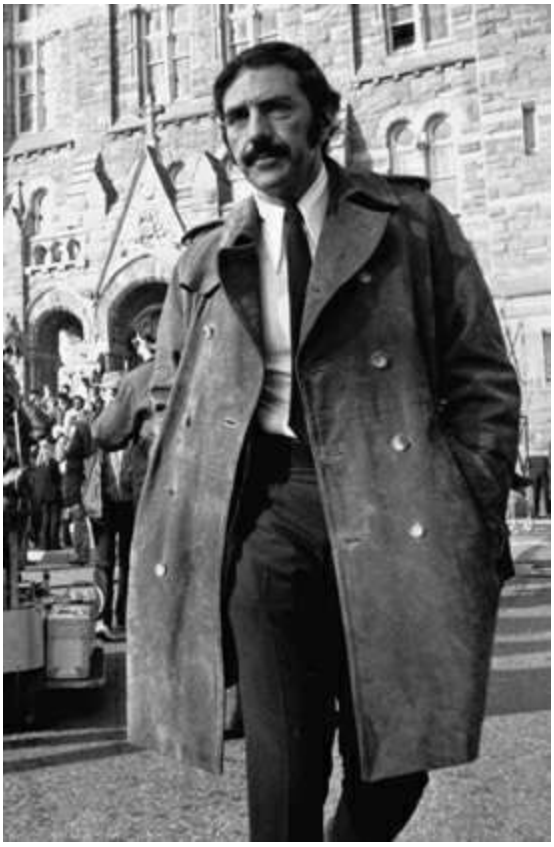
Arrival of the God in Egypt

They arrived in peace at Thebes. Then came the city of Thebes and the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes to the house of Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest. He set the gifts which the chief of Bekhten had given to him, of good things, before Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest, (but) he gave not everything thereof into his house. Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes arrived [at] his [plac]e in peace in the year 33, the second month, the ninth day, of King Usermare-Setepnere; that he might be given life like Re, forever.

Excerpted from James Henry Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt. *Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906.*

BLATTY, WILLIAM PETER

William Peter Blatty is an American novelist, screenwriter, and director. While an accomplished writer in a number of genres and mediums, Blatty will forever be remembered as the author of *The Exorcist* (1971). The provocative and controversial novel was adapted as the film *The Exorcist* (1973), with Blatty writing the screenplay. Blatty later wrote the literary sequel *Legion* (1983) and adapted it, both writing and directing, as *The Exorcist III: Legion* (1990). He is perhaps the individual who shaped the cultural image of possession and exorcism more than any other in the latter half of the 20th century.



Author and producer William Peter Blatty on the set of the film *The Exorcist*, 1973. (Warner Brothers/Getty Images)

Blatty was born January 7, 1928, in New York City to Lebanese immigrants. He was raised primarily by his Catholic mother, with a Catholic education at a Jesuit school and later at Georgetown University. He later joined the United States Air Force and the United States Information Agency, stationed for a time in Beirut. He began to find success writing in the late 1950s, writing four comedic scripts for director Blake Edwards, along with

other screenplays and novels. He drew on his experiences in the film industry writing his most famous novel, *The Exorcist*, the story of a movie star's daughter, Regan MacNeil, her apparent possession by a demon, and her eventual exorcism by two priests: the self-doubting young Father Damien Karras and the experienced exorcist Father Lankester Merrin. Blatty took inspiration from the story of the late 1940s exorcism of a boy from Maryland (now believed to be Ronald E. Hunkeler). Having first encountered this story while an undergraduate, Blatty read as much as possible about this mysterious event and other exorcisms. He hoped that the story was true because it would confirm the reality of the supernatural and validate Catholic theology: if demons existed and could possess people, then God must likewise exist. At its core, *The Exorcist* is the story of Karras's path to reaffirming his commitment to Catholicism. As such, it is as much a story about faith as a horror story.

The film adaptation was directed by William Friedkin, an agnostic Jew, and some of the theological messages of Blatty's novel are obscured in the intense viscerality, vulgarity, and horror of the film. Nonetheless, it is an extremely faithful adaptation, keeping almost all of the book's subplots and realizing its most horrifying moments (including scenes of vomiting, head rotating, and most infamously, Regan violently masturbating using a crucifix). Benefitting from the sustained cultural interest in Satan and Satanism of the late 1960s and loosened censorship, *The Exorcist* became the second-highest grossing film of its year, and Blatty won the Academy Award for Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay). Its success ensured a cycle of American horror films about Satanism and/or demonic possession, among the first of which were *Abby* (1974) and *The Omen* (1976).

Blatty had no role in the disastrous *The Exorcist II: The Heretic* (1977), often described as a candidate for the worst film of all time, and entirely ignored it in his sequel novel *Legion*. The moral and spiritual messages of the first novel are reiterated far more clearly in the sequel, with an insistence that recent discoveries of science support a Christian view of the universe. *Legion* focuses on a secondary character from *The Exorcist*, Detective Kinderman, and his investigation of the Gemini Killer, a serial killer who may contain the same demon that previously possessed Regan. The Gemini Killer was inspired by the real-life Zodiac Killer, who mentioned *The Exorcist* in one of his letters to the police. Blatty later wrote and directed the adaptation *The Exorcist III: Legion*. He wanted to simply call it *Legion*, but the studio

insisted on foregrounding its links to the prior film. *The Exorcist III* fared poorly at the box office and received mixed reviews at the time, but has enjoyed a stronger retrospective reputation.

Now well into his 80s, Blatty is still active and continues to publish new fiction. In 2011 he released a revised version of *The Exorcist*, making a number of minor changes he claims he always intended but failed to make in the initial rush to publication. He also remains active in Catholic culture. In 2013 he filed a canon law petition against his alma mater, Georgetown University, charging it with failing to adhere to Catholic doctrine, hosting pro-choice speakers, employing a majority of non-Catholic employees, and staging a production of *The Vagina Monologues*.

Murray Leeder

See also: *Exorcist, The*; Hunkeler, Ronald E.

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BLUMHARDT, CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt (1842–1919) was a Lutheran pastor from the Württemberg region in southwestern Germany. Shaped by key influences in the German Awakening Movement (*Erweckungsbewegung*), Blumhardt caused a major stir when in 1899 he decided to publicly identify himself with the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* or SPD). In so doing, Blumhardt brought an important tradition of thought and practice regarding possession and exorcism into the public realm and gave it an important political-theological stamp.

Blumhardt's father was a figure of some importance within trans-Atlantic circles interested in the phenomenon of healing, whose career began with an event of exorcism. From 1842 to 1844, while serving as pastor in the village

of Möttlingen, Johann Christoph Blumhardt found himself dealing with a purported case of demonic possession. The end of the ordeal culminated with the demonic power confessing that "Jesus is victor!," which became a kind of watchword for the elder Blumhardt and later his son, signifying that God was interested in invading the world to free humanity from physical as well as psychical and spiritual bondage.

Christoph grew up in the community that eventually formed around his father's healing ministry at Bad Boll near Stuttgart. After completing theological studies at Tübingen (1862–1866), Christoph had several short pastorates in Spöck (1866), Gernsbach (1866), Dürnau (1867), and Hohenstaufen (1868), before joining his father at Bad Boll in 1869. Upon his father's death in 1880, Christoph assumed the leadership at Bad Boll.

By 1890, Christoph had become deeply dissatisfied with life at Bad Boll, especially decrying the self-serving nature of the spirituality evident among those who visited. Blumhardt emphasized that healing was meant to be a sign of God's eventual promise to restore the whole cosmos, but visitors and those close to the ministry treated such things as little more than a spiritual entitlement. He began to rethink his father's message and experience—which had included the decisive events at Möttlingen—and discerned that God was in fact at work in the workers' movement and its cry for justice. He believed that as his father had expected the healing of the body, so now the expectation should be the healing of the body politic.

Though his identification with the SPD in 1899 resulted in Blumhardt's defrocking by the state church, he nevertheless emphasized that his service in the party was an act of Christian discipleship. He would serve in the regional legislature as a representative of the SPD from 1900 to 1906, when he retired due to ill health and a less sanguine view of party politics.

Blumhardt anticipated later theologians by arguing that the social sphere can also be possessed, and argued that God's fight was now to liberate humanity from the social systems that enslave human beings, chief among which were militarism, racism, imperialism, and mammonism. He was one of the very few Christians to preach against the national desire to go to war in 1914. He died in 1919, having influenced a whole generation of future leaders and theologians, including Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Christian T. Collins Winn

See also: Blumhardt, Johann Christoph; Progressive Politics

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BLUMHARDT, JOHANN CHRISTOPH

Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805–1880) was a Lutheran pastor in the Württemberg region of southwestern Germany. Well known among neo-Pietists, especially in the networks that connected southwestern Germany with Switzerland and the Basel Mission Society, Blumhardt came to some prominence in the early 1840s when a local revival erupted following a purported case of demonic possession in the small village of Möttlingen where he was the pastor. Blumhardt possessed a unique understanding of demonic possession as well as a profound ambivalence about the attention that his experiences had garnered; nevertheless, he would also become an important figure in the burgeoning trans-Atlantic faith healing movement.

Blumhardt was born in the city of Stuttgart. After completing theological studies at the University of Tübingen (1824–1829), Blumhardt had short pastoral stints in the villages of Dürrmenz (1829–1830), and Iptingen (1837–1838), which were interrupted by a seven-year teaching post at the Basel Mission house (1830–1837). In 1838, he was installed as pastor in the village of Möttlingen. In the fall of 1841 one of his parishioners, Gottliebin Dittus (1815–1872), approached Blumhardt complaining of strange things happening to her at night. Blumhardt reported feeling repelled by the woman, but by the spring of 1842, he was hearing reports from family members and close neighbors of what appear to be poltergeist phenomena. When Blumhardt investigated, with members of the city council, he encountered loud bangs, objects appearing under the skin of Dittus, abnormal hemorrhaging, as well as Dittus speaking in voices that did not appear to be her own. Objects associated with occult practices in the region, such as burnt paper, coins, and bird bones, were found in the Dittus house, usually located near the origination point for many of the noises.

Over the course of the next two years, Blumhardt entered into a situation of pastoral care for which he was not prepared. His visits, which were always taken with multiple witnesses, were punctuated with violent fits or

hemorrhagic events, vomiting, attempts at suicide, or with long conversations with purported spirits, often of the departed, who spoke through Dittus. It was not until the latter stages of the two-year drama that the voices took on a more sinister tone, identifying themselves as demonic powers.

Though often at his wits' end, Blumhardt found that the only effective means for dealing with many of the phenomena was prayer, fasting, or the reading of Scripture in Dittus's presence. Though he had initially appealed to local doctors—and would often bring in local physicians to gain additional insight into Dittus's condition—it was primarily through these spiritual means that Blumhardt could often bring a given situation to quick conclusion. And though he initially had entertained talking to the spirits of the departed, he quickly stopped that practice and would only speak in the form of questions, eventually invoking the name of Jesus as the authority to which the spirits or powers were required to submit. Even during the early period, Blumhardt was wary of being possessed of too much curiosity, so that his conversations were almost always of a pastoral nature, in which he often asked a given subject about the sins that bound them and prayed for their release.

The episode concluded in December of 1843, which Blumhardt described in his 1844 report for the Church Consistory in Stuttgart. Though his account of the events at Möttlingen offers detail regarding Dittus's symptoms, and though Blumhardt's letters and pastoral counseling show evidence of an elaborate demonology, it was nonetheless the conclusion that was most decisive for his thought and ministry. The phenomena did not end as the result of a ritualistic exorcism. Rather, Blumhardt found that spontaneous prayer, buttressed by fasting and the reading of Scripture, were his only means for facing the purported spiritual powers that possessed Dittus. He concluded that it was in fact the living Jesus who eventually appeared and did battle against the demonic power. This deduction, based on the events of Möttlingen and a careful reading of the New Testament, led Blumhardt to the conviction that God was breaking into the world to set the captives free through events of physical, as well as psychical and spiritual healing. Blumhardt's ministry, which went on for another 36 years, was marked by this conviction.

The Möttlingen event was immediately followed by a local revival predicated on confession, repentance and the laying of hands—the practice of which was quite controversial in Blumhardt's context. He eventually left the

parish ministry in Möttlingen and through the help of the local state government and generous benefactors purchased a newly renovated spa at Bad Boll where he founded a kind of spiritual retreat center, which was focused on spiritual counseling, and a healing ministry.

Blumhardt's ministerial reach traversed linguistic and cultural boundaries. He was visited by people of modest or no means, as well as by aristocracy and the educated elite. His publications—especially the serial newspaper the *Blätter aus Bad Boll*—connected him to circles in France, Switzerland, and Germany, and he carried on correspondence with figures in England and North America. Blumhardt died in 1880 and was succeeded by his son Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt.

Christian T. Collins Winn

See also: Blumhardt, Christoph Friedrich

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BRAZIL

Modern Brazil is populated by and tolerant of a diverse spectrum of long-standing spirit possession practices. Broadly speaking, there are five main religious contexts in which possession and exorcism occur in Brazil: indigenous, Christian, Afro-Brazilian, Spiritist, and New Religious. The oldest ritual contexts of spirit possession in Brazil belong to indigenous communities (such as the Baniwa, Kaxinawá, and Yonomami), most of whom reside in forested terrains like the Amazon jungle. Here, the ritual specialist is known generically as a "shaman" and is principally responsible for mediating between the physical world and the supernatural realm. "Guardian spirits" occupying the higher levels of the indigenous cosmos act

as powerful allies to the shaman. These higher spirits provide the shaman both protection from malign supernatural forces and valuable information about the causes of, for example, individual sickness, location of game, or means of resolving social disputes. Employing the ecstatic practice of "soul flight," the shaman visits his guardian spirits in their celestial homes by temporarily dislocating his soul from its bodily moorings. The ecstasy of soul flight may be induced through prolonged chanting and dance or provoked through the consumption of natural substances such as tobacco or psychoactive plants (e.g., ayahuasca). The shaman executes his responsibilities by also calling upon the help of "auxiliary spirits" that permanently reside in his body. Usually occupying the stomach or vital organs, helper spirits are ritually invoked to support the shaman in the day-to-day performance of healing, divination, and sundry other duties.

Within Christian rituals practiced in Brazil, spirit possession is regarded as a pathological condition that needs rectifying through the exorcism of evil, demonic forces. While exorcism rituals still occur within Brazil's historically dominant Christian tradition of Roman Catholicism, declining support by the Catholic hierarchy is resulting in the diminution of official exorcists charged with treating demonic possession. In stark contrast to its Catholic cousin, the Protestant Christianity of neo-Pentecostalism has made demonic exorcism a core component of its ritual practices. Within neo-Pentecostal movements such as the "Universal Church of the Kingdom of God" or "International Church of God's Grace," large-scale exorcism rituals occur on a regular basis. Frequently scheduled on Friday evenings, these "liberation" rituals are explicitly designed to compete with and rectify the consequences of supposedly demonic traditions such as Candomblé, Spiritism, and Umbanda.

A Candomblé African-Brazilian religion disciple dances in trance as a deity takes possession of her body during a ceremony for Oxossi, one of the 16 deities at their "terreiro" (temple) in São Paulo, Brazil on April 27, 2013. (YASUYOSHI CHIBA/AFP/Getty Images)

As the name suggests, and as with its spirit-oriented practices, Afro-Brazilian religiosity comprises a mixture of African-born and Brazilian-based components. Brought by the approximately four million slaves forcibly transported from their native homeland between 1530 and 1851, African beliefs and practices subsequently mixed with indigenous and popular Catholic worldviews to form the highly variegated belief system known today as Afro-Brazilian religiosity. The oldest Afro-Brazilian traditions emerged in Brazil's plantation states, with regional variations such as Candomblé (Bahia), Xangô (Pernambuco and Alagoas), and Tambor de Mina (Maranhão and Pará). Within Candomblé, for example, entities called *orixás* possess trained mediums known as "father" or "mother" of the saints. The medium's possession by an *orixá* comprises a mutually beneficial ritual exchange. On the one hand, possession of the medium allows the *orixá* to enjoy (relative to its idiosyncratic tastes) material goods such as food (including sacrificed animals), dance, and decorative clothing. On the other, and temporarily unconscious by virtue of the *orixá*'s overwhelming power, the possessed medium radiates cosmic energy (*axé*) throughout ritual space

and, acting as the possessing deity, offers guidance, healing, and encouragement to those present. Emerging in 1920s Rio de Janeiro, the religion of Umbanda represents the most urbanized form of Afro-Brazilian religiosity. Ranging from the disincarnate souls of deceased humans, through the gods of traditional religions, to folkloric creatures and extra-terrestrial beings, the contemporary Umbanda cosmos is densely populated by a highly diverse array of spiritual entities. Seeking to evolve by performing ritual acts of charity, Umbanda spirits possess trained mediums frequently to heal but also to offer advice. Most commonly, illness and misfortune are attributed by Umbanda mediums to the work of "low" spirits attracted by bad thoughts and deeds or summoned by third parties intent on doing harm. The remedies prescribed range from spiritual cleansing and ritual exorcism, through placatory offerings and counter alliances with "high" spirits, to visiting a doctor or adopting a more positive mental attitude.

Inspired by the writings of Allan Kardec (1804–69), Spiritism has been present in Brazil since the mid-19th century. In contrast to its French origins, Brazilian Spiritism embodies an expressly religious character oriented around the twin pillars of moral instruction and therapeutic intervention. Channeled through trained mediums, moral instruction is provided by disincarnate spirits whose evolutionary passage through successive reincarnations has placed them beyond the constraining effects of materiality. Such morally uplifting and spiritually edifying insight serves to orient and assist embodied spirits as they undergo the trials and tribulations of their current incarnational cycle. Therapeutic intervention by Spiritist mediums may involve no more than the spirit-assisted diagnosis of a particular problem and subsequent prescription of homeopathic treatments or lifestyle changes. When faced with more serious or prolonged issues, mediumistic prescription is complemented by direct action upon the patient. A lesser form of therapeutic intervention involves use of the "pass" by which the medium recalibrates the patient's vital force through a series of hand gestures and arm movements around or upon the body. Known commonly as "disobsession" (*desobsessão*) more serious cases may require the removal of a less evolved or disoriented spirit that has, for a variety of reasons, erred into the body or latched onto the energy field of the patient in question. The intrusion of an errant spirit into the body of another causes physical, emotional, and psychological problems that will continue, if not worsen, until the intrusive spirit is ritually persuaded or coerced into returning to the spiritual plane.

In keeping with its overarching societal context, the new religious landscape of Brazil likewise reflects the long-standing and culturally pervasive influence of spirit possession. As such, mediumship, trance channeling, and neo-shamanism are popular features of the ritual repertoires of Brazil's new religious movements. The Valley of the Dawn (*O Vale do Amanhecer*), for example, is one of Brazil's most well-known new religions and employs spirit mediumship as its central ritual component. In the same vein, spirit possession plays an important part in the ritual practices of the new religions of A Barquinha and Santo Daime.

Andrew Dawson

See also: Afro-Atlantic Religions; Channeling; Kardecism; Pentecostalism; Santo Daime; Shamanism; Umbanda

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BROSSIER, MARTHE

Born in 1573 to a family of declining social status in Romorantin, France, Marthe Brossier was the third of four unmarried daughters, which threatened her previously positive prospects for marriage. She briefly considered entering a local convent; however, she failed to attain a position, possibly due to her father's inability to provide the expected financial contribution to the convent. In 1597 Brossier fled her home, disguised as a man, but was soon captured and returned where she faced further shame and ridicule. Furthermore, the changing social status of the family produced animosity between the Brossier family and the neighboring Chevreau family when a daughter of the Chevreau family married a prominent local landlord who subsequently backed out of negotiations to marry his nephew to the eldest daughter of the Brossier family. In 1598 Brossier exhibited commonly recognized symptomology of demonic possession including inexplicable

screaming and contortions. Brossier attacked Anne Chevreau, an unmarried, middle-aged daughter of the rival Chevreau family, implicating her as the witch responsible for her possession. When Anne threatened a civil suit in response to the attack, Brossier's father reportedly encouraged the accusation of witchcraft, leading to Anne's imprisonment. The prominence of the Chevreau family likely delayed any torture and subsequent execution expected for witches in 16th-century France.

Managed by her father, Brossier toured France undergoing public exorcisms, which reportedly generated considerable income for the Brossier family. In March 1599, Marthe underwent public exorcisms at a Paris monastery in which the demon Beelzebub reportedly denounced the French Huguenots as servants of the Devil in a series of exorcisms spanning nearly one month (this denunciation happened shortly after the Edict of Nantes granted rights to the Huguenots, a legal order which drew criticism from Catholic authorities). The demonic denunciations of a previously marginalized religious group sparked public uproar in Paris, causing the Bishop of Paris to order an investigation. Physicians and clergy examined Brossier, reporting conflicting judgments about the authenticity of her case. By order of King Henry IV of France, physician Michael Marescot examined Brossier, concluding the possession to be fraudulent. Brossier was imprisoned on April 3, and Anne Chevreau was likely released. In a meeting with Parliament, Brossier promised to refrain from further public performances in exchange for her release. She returned to Romorantin where she was taken by Alexander de la Rochefoueauld to Rome in 1600. There her public exorcisms were again put on display and used to fuel anti-Huguenot propaganda until political pressure from France secured a warrant for her return. After being located in Milan, Brossier disappeared from the historical record with no evidence of her return or continued public exorcisms.

Brossier's case raised several questions concerning the treatment of possession in early modern France. Did the state or the church have ultimate authority over possession cases, and is it physicians or clergy who should determine the authenticity of a case? Furthermore, the Brossier possession featured numerous political and financial agendas suggesting the plausibility of intentional fraud. Brossier's possession closely resembled that of an earlier case, Nicole Obry, which has led scholars to suggest that Brossier was coached in how to win crowds and sway ecclesial authorities.

Brossier's possession is unique among 16th-century French possession

cases in that the historical records uncharacteristically preserve Anne Chevreau's defense built upon a detailed explanation of why Brossier would fake the possessions in order to implicate Anne. Chevrau claimed that Brossier adopted the possession symptoms to free her family from the shame of her flight disguised as a man and her loss of marriage prospects. Furthermore, single middle-aged women were susceptible to the increasingly popular witch hunts spreading across France at the end of the 16th century. Three years before Brossier's alleged possession, three women were executed for witchcraft in Romorantin, triggering an influx of suspected possession cases. Chevreau suggested that by feigning possession, Brossier prevented herself from being accused of witchcraft as a result of her behavior and social status. Brossier along with her family is accused in some historical records of intentionally fabricating the possession. Chevreau, however, suggested that Brossiers's symptoms were the result of genuine mental anguish caused by her compromised social position that left her susceptible to the manipulation and coaching of others.

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See also: Dugdale, Richard; Gender; Psychological Interpretations

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BUDDHISM

Buddhism emerged in northern India in the sixth century BCE. Buddhism preserves many ideas about gods and spirits from local Indian traditions, but its philosophy asserts that everything, including the self, is ultimately empty and impermanent. Buddhism spread throughout all of Asia where it merged with local cultures and took many new forms. The varieties of Buddhism can be loosely categorized into the tradition of Theravāda Buddhism practiced in such places as Thailand, Burma, and Sri Lanka and the tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism practiced in such places as China, Tibet, and Japan. Spirit possession has been incorporated into various forms of Buddhism for 2500

years. It is difficult to portray a unified picture of spirit possession in the different contexts where the Dharma (the "Law" of the Buddha) spread out. Nonetheless, a few shared philosophical tenets characterize most of the Buddhist approaches to this phenomenon. The denial of an inner self in favor of a doctrine of non-self (Pali: *anatta*)—predicated on the recognition of an impermanent (*anicca*) aggregate of five factors of personality (*upādāna-khandha*)—significantly differentiates the way spirit possession has been doctrinally conceived in Buddhist traditions. Here in fact, possessing forces are not claimed to act on a unified notion of self but rather on the temporarily constituted aggregates that make up the person.

Also, Buddhist traditions often incorporated in their cosmologies local gods, spirits, and demons, belonging to coexistent, and sometimes competing, systems of belief and practice. This incorporation was undertaken through specific acts of ritual and narrative appropriation, by subjugating, taming, or adopting such nonhuman actors and reframing them either as protectors of the Dharma or as deluded beings in need of salvation. These last two categories are often contrasted to each other in early Buddhist scriptures, describing local deities who are allowed to reside in the monasteries and tasked with defending the monks from unwanted spirits (*Petavatthu*, 30). Unwanted spirits belong to different classes of "nonhumans" (*amānussa*), who may sometimes possess or "grasp" (*graha*) either monks or laypersons.

Ancient monastic regulations allowed monks to interrupt their rain retreat when struck by possession of *piśāca*, monsters who feed themselves with raw flesh, excrements, and all sorts of impurities (*Vinaya-piṭaka*, 4.196). They also describe cases of monks acting as exorcists (*bhūtavejjaka*), who unwillingly caused the death of the spirit (1.146) or even of the possessed person himself (1.147).

From these passages, possession emerges as an observable and acknowledged event, and exorcism performed by Buddhist monks is described as an accepted practice. But the rise of Mahāyāna (first century CE) and esoteric Buddhism (sixth and seventh centuries CE) saw a systematic assimilation within the Buddhist tradition of divinatory practices of possession associated with gods and demons of the Hindu pantheon.

The Tibetan version of the *Subāhuparipṛcchānāmatantra* (Questions of Subahu), for instance, describes a Tantric ritual in which a *pratisenā*, a minor oracular deity, is invited into the body of a young boy or girl through recitation of secret *mantra*s and the creation of a sacred space. The youth,

gazing at a specific shining surface (a mirror, a sword, the moon, the sun, water, a lamp, or others), will be able to see past, present, and future events, looking through the eye of the oracular deity.

This kind of ritual, called elsewhere *āveśa* or *svasthāveśa* (lit. "possession of one who is in a good state of health"), involved the use of children as mediums for oracular possession and became particularly widespread in East Asia. In China the term used was *aweishe*, and the rite was first explained in the *Amoghapāśa sūtra* (*Bukong juansuo tuoluoni zizaiwang zhou jing*, *T.* 1097, translated by Manicintana in 693 CE), was described in connection with healing practices. This Buddhist ritual of possession, besides being widely employed, underwent significant transformations in Tang and Song China, through a closer association with practices of visualization and identification with Tantric deities.

Such liturgies increasingly encountered the favor of political elites in the countries where esoteric Buddhism was more influential, thus developing a close connection with central power authorities. Vajrabodhi's (671–741 CE) exorcism for the daughter of the Tang emperor Xuanzong, employing two female child mediums; the involvement of Nech'ung oracle in Tibetan politics, also consulted by Dalai Lama and his administration as one of the several institutionalized monastic oracles performed by "oracle-priests" (Tibetan: *sungma* or *ch'ökyong*) based in major Buddhist monasteries; and, secret possessions by Tantric Gods as part of high-caste Newar Buddhist initiations in Kathmandu Valley, are just few examples of how frequently Buddhist discourses employed spirit possession in association with power.

However, possession and mediumship are also commonly widespread outside these elitist circles. Nepalese mediums of Kathmandu Valley, for example, are usually low-status women, described as occupying a somewhat "half-way central" position, in a loose continuum with male, institutional Tantric priests at one end, and female, peripheral witches at the other. When performing, mediums rely on paraphernalia, such as daggers and *vajra*s (thunderbolt-weapons), borrowed from high-caste Vajrācārya rituals, through which they can employ Tantric power and authority in order to tame the demons and legitimize their pronouncements.

Esoteric Buddhist traditions are not the only ones that entertain a close relationship with possession. Theravāda Buddhism, with its large diffusion in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and the rest of Southeast Asia, represents an open field of different practices and doctrines in which rituals dealing with

spirit exorcism and mediumship have intensely developed.

During the exorcism for the Great Cemetery Demon Mahāsōnā, performed in Sri Lanka in the Galle area, officiants aim to reconstruct a symbolic order of the universe, which the demons, by possessing their victims and tricking them with illusions (Sanskrit: *māyā*), had tried to subvert. The ritual proceeds from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., through offerings, fearsome intonations of poems and songs, executions of *mudrā*s and *mantra*s, fierce drumming and dances, manipulation of sacred implements, and final dramatic acts that include comic dialogues. This ritual process gradually displays a hierarchic cosmological structure. Appropriate offerings are given to different classes of beings, starting from the inferior plane of ghosts, passing throughout encounters with demons, gods and guardian deities, and arriving up to the Buddha. During this cosmological ascent, each level is subsumed and integrated into the superior one, so that the demons reveal their subordination to the divine beings, and the hierarchical order is restored. This ordering of the universe is also marked by specific actions and incantations through which the evil spirits are expelled from the body of the patient. Music plays a specific role in this process, since it has the generative power to materialize demons and gods. Drumming rhythms are in fact created by the combination of five basic sounds, which are equivalent to the five elementary substances (*mahābhūta*) of matter. For the exorcists, specific rhythmic styles are associated with specific nonhuman entities and should evoke their mood (*rasa*), thus manifesting their presence into the dancer-exorcist himself, who is dressed in female attire. This is especially done in order to trap the demons into the exorcist's body and defeat them, because demons are thought to be attracted by the feminine character. Before the dances start, demons are dragged down the feet of the patient and trapped into a basket of offerings dedicated to them. Then they are drawn into the body of the exorcist, and eventually transferred to a rooster. The cock is regarded as an equivalent of the human being due to his walking upright on two legs and his domestic character, and he is thus used as a final substitute for the patient. The whole process, including the male exorcist's dance in female attire, is conceived as a way to trick the demons in the same way they had tricked their victims in order to ultimately reveal the illusory nature of both the demonic manipulations and reality itself. This is remarked at the end of the ritual by a set of comic dialogues occurring between the drummer and the exorcist-dancer. The parodic character of the comedy actually aims at playfully

inverting the traditional understanding of social situations by disclosing, through the comic effect, the inconsistencies of common roles and ideas, upon which we build up our conventional sense of reality.

Exorcism is not the only way to deal with spirit possession in Theravāda Buddhism. Harmful spirits can be converted into good beings by transferring Buddhist merits to them, and this emerges as one of the key mechanisms for pacifying the dead and improving their condition in the Otherworld. In contemporary Theravāda Buddhism, transfer of *karmic* merits is often used to transform the relationship between spirit and medium, changing the source of agency (i.e., who is acting upon whom), the control of possession, and sometimes the nature of the spirits themselves.

An example of such transformations can be found in rituals of possession in Cambodia, concerning local spirits called *neak tā*. These are spirits of place, usually associated with the ancestral founder of a village, thus incarnating local forms of political and social authority. They have the capacity to advise by means of oracles, but also to condemn by causing misfortunes to humans who violated the village's moral order and its taboos. *Neak tā* are commonly conceived as pre-Buddhist entities, but they were integrated into the Buddhist cosmological system through the ritual practice. For example, by using merit-making rituals, a person possessed by a malevolent spirit (Cambodian: *brāy*) can take over and invert the relationship of agency with this entity. Namely, he is able to switch from a position of passive recipient of the spirit's action to that of active manipulator of the spirit itself and change its status of *brāy* into that of *pāramī* ("benevolent spirit"). Moral transformation of the spirits, achieved through the transfer of merits, is thus equated to their change of status. Accordingly, by means of donations to the Buddhist clergy and transfer of merits, the spirit can further ascend the realms of rebirth and eventually be transformed into a cosmologically superior *neak tā*. If such transformation occurs, the spirit can reverse the agency relationship again, making the medium its royal consort (*snāṇ*) and finally guiding the human actor. However, the source of legitimacy of both the *neak tā* and the medium is ultimately located in the hands of the Buddhist monastic institution. The whole cosmological transformation is in fact possible only through the mediation of the monks, who are in charge of merit-making rituals and receive the donations, thus consolidating the moral subordination of the village authority to the Buddhist Dharma.

This is just one of the possible relational patterns involving local institutions and Buddhist clergy, played out by the phenomenon of possession. Often these patterns reflect the relationship between Buddhist discourses and local spirit cults, as exemplified by the phenomenon of shamanism in Mongolia, where local shamans were considered sometimes as complementary, sometimes in competition with monks, with regard to the mastery of spiritual entities. This relationship may reach a high degree of complexity even nowadays, among Darhad people in northern Mongolia, who are considered to possess an external "yellow side" and an internal "black side." While the "yellow side" (Mongolian: *shar tal*) is linked to a peaceful, balanced, morally unambiguous character associated with Gelugpa Buddhism—a strongly established institution in the area until the rise of socialism—the "black side" (*har tal*) is linked to a violent, uncontrolled and morally ambiguous shamanic character. During the spirit possession ceremonies (*böö böölöh*) the black component is thought to be "vomited" (*booljiih*, etymologically connected to *böölöh* "shamanizing") and reversed outside, so obscuring the Buddhist side of the person.

Village spirit cults in northeast Thailand, instead, are often organized according to a relation of reciprocity between monks and exorcists. The spirits most associated with possession are called *phii paub*. The *mau tham* (exorcist) can be considered as both a caricature and an inversion of the figure of the Buddhist monk. His social position is diametrically opposed to that of the monk in that he is virtually illiterate and considered somewhat eccentric, and he primarily treats women's diseases. The monk instead occupies a central position in the moral economy of the village, building his authority on erudition and his detachment from women. However, when the exorcist performs his rituals, he recites Buddhist verses *gāthā*, besides undergoing an initiation ceremony resembling monastic ordination. Also, he is required to offer prayers to the Buddha at his private home shrine every evening. Whereas the monk chants *gāthā* to teach morality and to transfer merit and blessing, the exorcist uses the sacred words, usually totally incomprehensible to him, to exert control over the spirits. This is achieved during a complex ceremony, in which he is invited to the home of the person afflicted by the *phii paub*, and summons the *thewada* (divine angels) to enter his body, in order to directly confront the malevolent spirits who possess the patient. A battle between the spirits and their human receptacles thus begins, leading to the revelation of the identity of the *phii paub*, and its subsequent

expulsion from the body of the victim.

Both the rituals of exorcism and divination described here are currently performed in Japan, where the aforementioned practice of *āveśa* (Japanese: *abisha*) has been undertaken by the Tendai and Shingon branches of esoteric Buddhism since at least the ninth century CE (*Shūi Ōjōden*, *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū*: 262). Exorcism is an important practice for the Nakayama branch of the Nichiren school, whose head temple is the Hokekyōji in Chiba prefecture. Monks from this tradition employ techniques based on the Lotus Sutra, the school's sacred text, combining them with esoteric prayers of empowerment (*kaji kitō*). Rituals of exorcism are performed at the temples, by monks who have undergone the hundred-day ascetic practice called *aragyō*. During these "fierce austerities," the practitioner undergoes regular cold water ablutions (*mizugori*), food and sleep deprivation, exhausting chants of *sūtra* and learns how to manipulate *bokken* (magic castanets used for expelling the spirits) in order to acquire the ascetic power necessary to fight malevolent nonhuman beings. Monks who undertake this ascetic training are entitled to perform exorcism, usually consisting in a direct confrontation with the spirits, practicing persuasion (*settoku*) in order to force the entities to mend their wrong conduct (*aratamemasu*) and leave the body of the patient.

As exemplified by this brief overview, Buddhist discourses of spirit possession significantly permeate past and present history of Asian societies. Far from being isolated remnants of a distant past, they challenge researchers to explore, from a different angle, issues of power, personhood, body, and agency, all the more relevant to an understanding of the contemporary world.

Tatsuma Padoan

See also: Burma; China; Hinduism; Japan; Mongolia; Nechung Oracle; Tantra; Tibet

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BURMA

The religious culture of Burma blends Theravāda Buddhism with traditional worship of spirits known as *nats*. Spirit possession principally occurs in three distinct ritual contexts: the tradition of honoring spirits, an esoteric tradition of Buddhism known as the *weikza* path, and exorcism.

The most institutionalized and sophisticated form of Burmese spirit possession is the traditional spirit cult, which honors a pantheon of "37 Lords." While the term *nat* can indicate many types of spirit, those known as "lords" (*min)* are believed to be the spirits of legendary persons who died violently. Many of "lords" are regarded as historical figures and are associated with the old Burmese monarchy. Specialists throughout Burma are able to incarnate lords during possession rituals.

In Burmese thought, *nats* may be malevolent or benevolent according to circumstances. Having no bodies, they possess people in order to express themselves and receive worship in exchange for protection and aid. *Nats* seek out both men and women to serve as mediums, sometimes forcibly. Spirits make their desires known by disrupting the life of the desired medium, often inflicting illness or madness. Burmese mediums describe the "head" (*gaung*) as being "caught" (*swe—)* or "seized" (*kaing—*) by a spirit. If someone suspects a *nat* is harassing them, they may consult an established medium, who can identify the spirit and discover what it wants. This may result in the afflicted person becoming initiated as a medium.

Initiation includes a ritual "marriage" to the spirit. The medium, regardless of gender, is designated the "spouse of the spirit" (*nat gadaw*). Following the marriage/initiation, the medium has a more egalitarian relationship with the spirit that extends to the entire pantheon of the 37 Lords. The medium can now become possessed voluntarily.

New mediums are integrated into troupes comprised of, on average, six to seven mediums. The troupes visit regional celebrations dedicated to a local spirit or pair of spirits, where they perform homage ceremonies to the 37 Lords on behalf of devotees. The ceremonies are held under a pavilion, temporarily erected for this purpose, in front a sponsor's house or near the

local spirit's sanctuary. Upon the musical invitation of a percussive orchestra, the appropriate spirit of the 37 Lords pantheon temporarily takes the seat of the "soul-butterfly" (*leikpya*), or the living essence of a medium, in order to incarnate itself. The possessed medium dons a special suit and performs a dance corresponding to the particular spirit. In this way, the spirit can be honored and will reciprocate by bestowing blessings or prophecies. A generic utterance accompanies such a possession: "the spirit joins— combines [to the medium]" (*nat pu—*). Others refer to different moments of the ritual: "the spirit enters [into the medium]" *(nat win-*), "the spirit predicts [things to come]" (*nat haw-*), "the spirit dances" (*nat ka-*).

A medium (or shaman) dances in one of the numerous shrines dedicated to the *nats* (spirits) during the Taungbyone *nat* festival. Every year in August, before the full moon, hundreds of thousands of people from all over Myanmar (Burma) gather for a week in Taungyone, a village close to Mandalay, to celebrate the *nats*, spirits that predate the arrival of Buddhism. They believe that their prayers and offerings will bring material happiness and prevent accidents, diseases, epidemics, droughts, foods, and other domestic problems. They also use mediums (Nageddo), most of them transvestites, who in a state of possession are supposed to enter in communication with a *nat*. (Thierry Falise/LightRocket via Getty Images)

A second type of possession occurs in the Buddhist *weikza* tradition. The *weikza* are believed to be powerful Buddhist practitioners who have become invisible, superhuman beings. The *weikza* defend the Buddhist religion, "keep watch" (*saung shauk-*) over Buddhists, and "care" for them (*ma sa-*). Numerous *weikza* cults throughout Burma are organized around one or

several individuals who officiate as intermediaries of *weikza* and of their power.

One or more *weikzas* will choose a medium to possess. The possessed medium preaches about Buddhist virtues as well as Buddhist secrets of protection and healing. Unlike *nat* possession, this does not require an initiation. *Weikzas* are thought to choose mediums with whom they have had a karmic connection in a previous life. *Weikza* possession is also less dramatic and performative than *nat* possession. It occurs in front of a Buddhist altar and does not involve dancing, gestures, or musical accompaniment. Only the timbre of the medium's voice changes to signal the presence of the possessing personality. The terms used to describe possession also differ. Practitioners often describe the "essence" or "energy" (*dat si-*) of the *weikza* entering the medium. Sometimes, they speak of *weikza's* spirit or consciousness (*nat kein*) occupying the medium.

Finally involuntary possession by an evil spirit (*payawga*) requires the aid of an exorcist (*payawga hsaya*, *ahtet-lan hsaya*). Exorcists are always men who have been initiated in a *weikza* cult specializing in exorcism. Consultations occur in the exorcist's home, a monastery (if the exorcist is a monk), or in front of a Buddha altar in the patient's home. The exorcist discerns the nature of malevolent beings (*meikhsa*), which may include witches or a spirit. Next, the exorcist may attempt to induce a trance state in the patient so that the spirit may be confronted. It is said that in the course of an exorcism, the "evil beings enter (into the individual) and attach themselves to him" (*meikhsa win pu-*). The exorcist then draws on his connection to a *weikza*, formed during initiation, and uses its power to banish this spirit. The exorcist may speak to the unwanted spirits and command them to depart or provoke them to possess him rather than the patient.

Exorcism requires the patient to deliver a performance similar to that of *nat* mediums. Certain patients demonstrate the ability to enter into possession almost at will. Many, however, do not have this ability. The art of the exorcist, therefore, consists of leading an individual without these abilities to "go beyond" himself with the purpose of ending the suffering that afflicts him. The difficulty is all the greater as Buddhist ethics forbid administering stimulating, intoxicating, or hallucinogenic substances to the patient.

Bénédicte Brac de la Perriére and Guillaume Rozenberg

See also: Buddhism

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CATHOLICISM

Within Catholicism exorcism is a rite instituted by Jesus Christ that can separate persons or objects from the control of demons. Although any believer can technically administer an exorcism, the regular course of exorcism in the Catholic Church is through specially approved priest exorcists granted permission by their local bishop. Exorcism occurs as part of various church rites and is considered sacramental but is not one of the seven sacraments. Prayers of exorcism play a part in blessing objects and baptisms as a preventative measure against evil in the regular course of Christian life. The Rite of Exorcism exists to combat active possession and is rarely performed except in cases that conform to certain established norms. The role of exorcism, its causes, and the frequency of its application remains a controversial area within Roman Catholic theology and practice.

Unlike sacraments, the act of exorcism does not need to conform to certain words or actions. An exorcist uses prayers set out in the *Rituale Romanum* that can be adapted into pious statements or even a conversation with the afflicted all undertaken in the name of Jesus Christ. Successful exorcism can take days, months, or even years to be completed; thus, it should be seen as a repeating process rather than a singular event. The efficacy of the sacrament is determined by permission from religious superiors and the faith of the individual exorcist. An exorcism can only be performed after a thorough medical examination has proven that the subject's afflictions are not of natural origin. Church authorities in the 20th century have limited the use of exorcisms in step with advances in medical science, in particular psychology and neurology. It is recommended that all medical and spiritual steps be taken before a person enters into an exorcism, including medication, counseling, and the communal prayer life of the Church, such as confession and mass. Individuals and communities also have available to them prayers known as "prayers of deliverance" based on the general power of prayer and faith available to all Christians.

To guard the faithful from charlatans and magicians and in response to Protestant accusations of superstition, the Catholic Church gradually limited

who could exorcise and set out the general parameters for conducting an exorcism. While the papacy and the Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome are charged with guiding and interpreting the rite, the authority to exorcise remains firmly with the local bishop. The Rite of Exorcism was significantly revised in 1998 as part of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Sometimes known by its Latin title *De Exorcismis et Supplicationibus Quibusdam*(Of Exorcisms and Certain Supplications), this document was originally composed in 1614 and outlines prayers and actions to be undertaken by the exorcist. The recent revisions allow for the rite to be performed in the local language along with the original Latin text. The revisions also provide for greater discernment of the boundary between mental illness and demonic possession. Although the document has been revised, the older editions of the work are also considered valid for use in exorcism.

The Rite of Exorcism commences with a litany of the saints, the Our Father, a prayer for the possessed, an admonishment of the demon, and the reading of passages from the Gospel, either from John 1, Mark 16, or Luke 10. The minister then dons his stole and places his right hand on the head of the possessed and says three prayers of exorcism accompanied by the imposition of the Sign of the Cross. There is provision for these prayers to be repeated as much as necessary, and those present are asked to join their prayers with those of the exorcist, in particular reciting prayers such as the Hail Mary, the Magnificat, and the Apostle's Creed. There are also prayers intended to protect the afflicted from further demonic acts which the priest prays at the conclusion.

Catholic exorcists allow for an increasing scale of demonic possession from the "ordinary" to the "extraordinary" based on the relationship of the possessed with the satanic in their lives. This includes external physical pain caused by the demon, "obsession," where the demon takes control intermittently of thoughts and dreams of the possessed, and full possession, where the spirit takes over complete control of the body. A number of saints and pious persons suffered from "oppression," where the afflicted maintains control of their mind and body but receives bodily suffering and torment from a demonic spirit. Further, a person can choose to enter into possession, which is termed "subjugation." Finally, "infestation" occurs when an object, building, or animal is possessed. Some of these terms are not mutually exclusive; rather, an individual could suffer from an "obsessive" possession

from an infested object such as a talisman or another's curse.

The Rite of Exorcism has a twofold purpose: first to diagnose the existence of demonic possession and second to liberate those suffering from it. The Catholic Church outlines certain indicators for those suffering from demonic possession after all medical possibilities have been eliminated. Some of these warning signs are close to the symptoms of mental illness and include strange body postures, mutilation of the body, loss of appetite, or changes in voice or personality without warning. Evidences of demonic possession also encompass supernatural transformations or powers, such as unusual strength, speaking in previously unknown languages or in tongues, sudden temperature changes in the room, and secret knowledge of the thoughts and past actions of others. Further, those suffering from demonic possession have particular aversion to anything related to God or the Church to such an extent that they will react violently to the presence of crucifixes or other religious items, refuse to enter churches or consecrated ground, or take part in sacraments or prayers.

Besides the requirement that the exorcist have the permission of his bishop and possess a strong faith life, it is suggested that exorcisms be conducted in the presence of more than one person and never be sensationalized in the media, such as television, photography, or stage performances. Exorcism as a prayer has two distinct forms, sometimes called deprecative or directed to God for His intercession, or imperative and intent on expelling Satan. The most commonly used version of the imperative is the phrase *Vade retro satana* (Step back, Satan) dating back at least to a 15th-century manuscript attributed to the Benedictine Order of priests. This phrase is used generally to repel satanic influences and was officially added to the rite in 1742 by Pope Benedict XIV. It is also known that demons are compelled to respond to statements made in the name of the Lord or the Virgin Mary.

The Catholic Church considers the rite of exorcism to be established and handed down by Jesus Christ through his ministry on earth. A number of examples exist in the Bible of Jesus expelling demons or granting such a power to his disciples. Christ healed sufferers from physical and mental afflictions caused by demons, as mentioned in a number of instances in the Gospels of Mark and Luke. In Catholic theology, demons (as fallen angels) retain their powers with relation to the natural world but cannot act outside of Providence or God's Will.

The history of the Catholic Church encompasses a number of possessions and exorcisms that each can be considered unique because of the individual possessed, the nature of the possession, and the means of liberation. Individuals, groups, animals, and objects are possible subjects of demonic possession. A number of saints suffered afflictions at the hands of demons, including Jean-Marie Vianney (the Cure d'Ars), Teresa of Avila, Francis Xavier, and John Bosco. In the case of the Cure d'Ars, the demon (he called it *grappin*) remained to afflict him throughout his life. Demons are known to afflict entire communities, churches, or families. Evil spirits were the primary source of chaos within the entire community of Ursuline nuns at Loudun, France, in 1634 and Louviers in 1647. Surrealist painter Salvador Dali was purportedly exorcised by an Italian friar in 1947, and this experience served as the inspiration for a sculpture of the crucified Christ. Mother Teresa also underwent an exorcism while in the hospital in Kolkata, India. The exorcism was arranged by Archbishop Henry D'souza, who was also hospitalized and noticed the elderly nun appeared to be under spiritual distress.

Just as human beings can be possessed by demons, Catholic tradition also makes provisions for objects and animals that are similarly infested. Purported cases of possession through contact with these objects include owning these objects by personal intention, through the artifice of others, or even by accidental ingestion. Little is definitively established on how certain objects can be infested by evil spirits, but some have suggested theories ranging from dark magic to bad intent (like the "evil eye"). Further, items exorcised in the regular course of blessing such as holy water, salt, oil, and other sacramentals play a key role in cases of possession. The use of exorcised items within the course of warding off demonic activity is sometimes referred to as "indirect" exorcism.

Catholic clergy are divided over the significance of exorcism for the modern Church. Gabriele Amorth, founder of the International Association of Exorcists, sees exorcism as vital to the Church's mision. He suggests that modern media, new age healing religions, bad intent, and heavy metal music can make one susceptible to possession. Amorth also describes people with exceptional abilities to perceive and sense demonic presences as "seers and sensitives" who he sometimes makes use of in his exorcisms. Ulrich Niemann, a German Jesuit priest and psychiatrist, on the other hand, was highly skeptical of demonic possession and attributed the majority of cases put before him to mental illness. The range and variety of theories related to

demonic possession within the Catholic tradition demonstrate the often imprecise or individualized nature of this rite.

Exorcism as it is associated with Catholic culture and in particular its pre-Vatican II aesthetic has a significant presence in modern culture. Often exorcism is evoked to demonstrate the reactionary nature of the Catholic Church or as a romantic appeal to its connection to the supernatural. In Denis Diderot's scandalous 1796 novel *La Religieuse* (the nun), which claims to be the story of a young woman compelled to enter a convent, the main character suffers through an exorcism that she compares to the Jews torturing Jesus Christ. For reformers and free thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries, exorcism was an example of the backwards thinking and superstitious nature of the Catholic Church. During the 20th century Catholic exorcism gained popular attention with the publication of William Peter Blatty's novel *The Exorcist* in 1971. The novel and its film adaptation inspired a renewed interest in possession and the supernatural inside and outside of Catholicism as well as started a whole genre of films about exorcism. A marked increase in requests for exorcisms occurred in the last quarter of the 20th century. Often, as in the film *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* (2005), historical exorcisms and their impact on families and communities serve as inspiration.

In May 2013, Pope Francis was alleged to have given a public exorcism to a Mexican national known only as Angel V. Videos circulated showing the Pope laying hands on a man in a wheelchair who immediately entered into a trance and made noises. While the Vatican has repeatedly stated that the Pope was only giving his blessing and not performing an exorcism, the prominence of this occurrence in media reflects a general curiosity for the role of exorcism within Catholicism. This increased interest, coupled with the 1998 revisions of the rite and popular representations of exorcism, reinforces the caution on the part of the Catholic hierarchy to proclaim demon possession and exorcism in the 21st century.

Sean P. Phillips

See also: Amorth, Gabriele; Baptism; Benedict Medal; Blatty, William Peter; International Association of Exorcists; Loudun Possessions; Martin, Malachi; Michel, Anneliese; *Rituale Romanum*

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CELE, CLARA GERMANA

Clara Germana Cele, a Christian teenager from South Africa, allegedly made a pact with Satan that gave her exceptional abilities. According to witnesses, starting in 1906 at the age of 16, she could levitate up to five feet in the air. She was sometimes in a horizontal position; when that was the case, her clothing remained tight against her body rather than draping downward, as would be expected. Other times, she was in a vertical position, with her feet several feet above the ground. People tried to tug her down but to no avail. If sprinkled with holy water, she would fall back to the ground, and it was determined that Cele was in fact possessed by a demon.

It is difficult to track down original sources of material about Cele and challenging to know what is legend and what is fact. The story that has been told includes these elements: Cele attended the Marianhill Order mission school. This school was founded by five religious women on September 8, 1885, following this mission statement: "We don't make distinctions between colours, or between religions." This school was located in Umzinto, a town about 80 kilometers from Durban, where sugarcane was the main source of economic activity. Other sources put Cele at St. Michael's Mission in Natal, South Africa.

Cele may have been an orphan who was baptized as an infant. It is believed that Cele made a pact with the devil at an age as young as four, but, prior to showing signs of demonic possession, she was thought by the nuns to be normal and healthy, although perhaps a bit eccentric. By 1906, though, she would tear at her clothes and make grunting and growling sounds normally associated with an animal, perhaps a raging lion or angry bull. By August 20, she appeared to be talking to invisible beings and asked the nuns at the school

to get Father Erasmus Horner so that she could confess her sins before Satan killed her. She was overheard telling an invisible being that she had been betrayed, promised days of glory but receiving cruel treatment instead.

When splashed with holy water, it apparently burned her. When examiners tested her by splashing her with ordinary water, she only laughed, suggesting her reaction was not feigned. She also complained about being near a cross and could seemingly sense religious objects even if well hidden. Cele allegedly could make her body become flexible like rubber, and she would travel around the church like a snake. When she bit a nun, the bite looked remarkably like a snake bite.

Cele knew information that she seemingly had no typical way of knowing. She was able to describe a journey of a priest who was traveling from South Africa to Rome in significant detail. When a man laughed at her, she revealed scandalous facts about his life, including specific dates, times, and names. She could speak Polish, German, French, and other languages, according to a nun, without being taught.

On September 10, 1906, an exorcism was performed by Father Erasmus and Father Mansueti, the rector of the school. They attempted to cast out Cele's demons from morning until noon and from 3:00 p.m. until night without success. In fact, she knocked the Bible out of a priest's hand and tried to choke him. The next day, the two men worked from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. until 170 witnesses heard a demon say that he would signal his departure from her body by levitating. Cele appeared to be healed, but then Father Erasmus traveled away from the school. She apparently relapsed and made a new pact with the devil. So, on April 24 and 25, 1907, another two-day exorcism took place, with a foul smell detected when the demon departed.

Kelly Boyer Sagert

See also: South Africa

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CHANGELINGS

In European folklore, a changeling is a fairy creature put in place of a human being, most often a baby or toddler, though in some cases an adult. Technically, changelings are not a form of spirit possession. The alien entity is thought to be physically present while the person it replaces has been abducted to the fairy realm. If the changeling can be expelled, the victim can be retrieved from the fairies. However, changeling lore has several structural similarities with demonic possession. Both cases involve suspecting a loved one is not who they appear to be, the manifestation of superhuman abilities, and a tradition of religious and folk remedies to drive off the alien personality and restore the familiar one.

Fairies are described as an otherworldly community living alongside humans, sharing the natural landscape. The English word *fairy* is used to describe a type of supernatural being found in the folklore of Ireland, Britain, and other regions of Europe. There are indigenous terms for these beings in the different cultural contexts, such as *sídh* in Ireland. Contemporary folk beliefs have precedents in the ancient Celtic mythologies. Circular settlements called ringforts are found in Northern Europe and date to between the Iron Age and the Early Middle Ages. In Ireland, the earthen mounds that are the remnants of these ringforts are known colloquially as “fairy forts” and are thought to be the dwelling-places of fairies and entrances to the otherworld.

“[A]nd her fairy sent [t]o bear him to my bower in fairy land.” Illustration from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by William Shakespeare; 1908 (color lithograph) by Arthur Rackham (1867–1939). (The Stapleton Collection/Bridgeman Image)

The changeling is usually a fairy baby but in some accounts is an old fairy man that the fairy community has forfeited in order to obtain a human baby. Descriptions of changelings vary widely across the corpus of legends. In Gaelic tradition, fairies are not regarded as being all that different from humans in appearance but may be paler, smaller in height (but not diminutive, as in modern portrayals), or have some unusual physical characteristic. It is said that the changeling will pine for its own kind and cry continually. The converse of the belief that humans should not eat “fairy food” lest they be trapped forever in the fairy realm is the idea that the changeling cannot, or does not want to, eat human food and so does not suckle or ingest breast milk. The changeling’s body may deteriorate physically, appear wizened, present sudden abnormalities, become hairy, or waste away. The infant begins to behave like an adult or to speak when it should not yet be able to. Other astounding feats performed by the changeling, in the form of a baby, are the playing of musical instruments, elongating its limbs, dancing, and jumping. The creature is described as

having advanced understanding and skills, often including an in-depth knowledge of events, which extends to far-off locations and the distant past.

Among the ways to expel a changeling is to threaten and maltreat it in order to get an admission of its true form, whereupon it would fly up the chimney, never to be seen again. The rationale behind abusing the changeling is that the fairies would try to save their relative and thus would make a reverse switch. Items used to frighten or hurt the changeling include metal implements, such as a spade or pins, since the fairies are supposed to fear metal, particularly iron. Since fairies are also said to be afraid of fire, a combination of metal and fire could be used, such as a hot poker. Religious objects, such as medals, holy water, and the cross or the presence of a Catholic priest are also utilized in attempting to expel a changeling since fairies are said to despise the Christian religion. Herbal potions containing specific ingredients such as foxglove were traditionally made to oust the changeling. Dunking the changeling's head under water was another method, as was exposing it to the elements by placing it outdoors overnight; a dung-heap is a motif in legends, as fairies are believed to be fastidious and to dislike dirt. Another way to get the changeling to betray its real nature is for a person to trick or confuse it by doing something very unusual, so that it will forget that it is pretending to be a baby and comment on, or ask about, what the person is doing.

Germany also has a tradition of changelings known as *wechselkinder*. Devils, rather than fairies, were believed to steal children and replace them with strange or defective children. The *Malleus Maleficarum*, a German witch-hunting manual, states that *wechselkinder* may also be born from artificial insemination carried out by demons or may be actual devils disguised as children. Martin Luther is said to have met a 12-year-old boy in Dessau in 1532 who did nothing but eat and excrete. Luther accused him being a "mass of flesh without a soul" created by the devil and suggested he be suffocated. In one account of the story, recorded by John Aurifaber, Luther explicitly called the child a changeling and—since the town refused to drown it—called on them to exorcise it by prayer. The boy died one year later; however, the cause of death is not recorded.

There have been modern examples of belief in changelings, the most notable being the case of Bridget Cleary in rural Tipperary, Ireland, in 1895. This woman was tortured and burned alive by her husband, father, aunt, and four cousins who claimed in their court testimonies that they were acting to

get rid of a changeling. Some believed the "real" Bridget would be returned from where she was being held in the fairy realm. Certain community members said the fairies had taken Bridget into the fairy fort in the field near her house and that she would emerge once the fairy was driven out of the Cleary household.

Jenny Butler

See also: Deaths Resulting from Exorcism

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CHANNELING

Channeling refers to the phenomenon whereby a psychic medium claims to be able, under certain conditions, to act as a channel or means of communication for some other intelligence or entity external to themselves. These entities are variously described as existing on higher levels or dimensions of being, existing in remote locations such as distant stars or planets, or being on a higher order of existence, such as angels, extraterrestrials, or ascended masters of wisdom. In many cases, when the entity or intelligence communicates, the psychic medium will enter a trance or passive state that allows the entity to speak through or control the medium's body. In other cases, the entity or intelligence will communicate through other means such as automatic writing or drawing. At times the medium is not in a trance but instead claims to hear an inner voice dictating messages they either say or write. Regardless of the means of communication, the psychic mediums assert that the information they communicate derives from a separate source that is using them as a channel of communication. This source is often portrayed as having greater knowledge or wisdom, hidden knowledge about the past or future, and a

deeper understanding of the mechanisms by which the universe operates. As a result, the psychic medium frequently becomes the leader of an organization or community by which the wisdom or teachings of the channeled entities can be recorded and disseminated.

Channeling can be traced historically to the merging of a number of related phenomena and religious traditions. These include mesmeric or hypnotic trance, Spiritualistic medium trance or possession, and communication with masters of wisdom. In general the term “channeling” emerged in New Age traditions coming out of the 1960s and fully taking form in the 1980s. However, channels claim that the phenomenon dates back to prehistory and that many forms of channeling in the past were misunderstood. Despite such claims, the connection to Spiritualism is unmistakable. Beginning in the mid-19th century, mediums claimed to communicate with the dead through a variety of means, including trance, possession, and automatic writing. These communications described the spirit world and its inhabitants. They also claimed that people continue to grow and mature spiritually in the spirit world and that death was not the end of life, but just a transition from one phase into another.

Toward the end of the 19th century, a movement called Theosophy, founded by the organization the Theosophical Society, claimed to be in contact with highly evolved human beings residing in the remote Himalayas. Theosophists claimed that specially trained and selected students communicated with these Masters, as they were called. This communication would happen through either letters or drawings that appeared out of nowhere or would occur physically when one of the masters would astrally travel to the location of the student. By the beginning of the 20th century, Theosophists claimed that one of the World Teachers would be born to lead humanity. This person, named Jiddu Krishnamurti, was a boy located in South India by one of the members who was claimed to be clairvoyant. Krishnamurti was prominent in the organization until 1929 when he resigned and became an independent teacher.

While this was happening, others followed the lead of Theosophists and Spiritualists, claiming to have their own encounters with spiritual entities. One such person was Guy Ballard, who claimed to have met an Ascended Master named the Count of St. Germain. Unlike the Theosophical Masters who were highly evolved and enlightened humans, Ballard’s Ascended Masters were noncorporal. They claimed to have transcended physical

bodies. Other psychics, such as Alice Bailey, also claimed to have communicated with ascended masters who she called the “Masters of the Ancient Wisdom.” In each case, the masters communicate ageless wisdom and advice to the followers of the mediums.

As the 20th century continued, others claimed to be in communication with transcendent entities. One of the most famous was the psychic healer, Edgar Cayce. In 1900 Cayce underwent hypnosis to cure laryngitis. While in trance, it was discovered that he could diagnose illness and proscribe cures. Later he found that he could enter trance and look into the past lives of people and see how the problems of this life were connected to past lives. At times he also claimed to have channeled entities, the most common being the Archangel Michael. Through his trances, Cayce gave detailed accounts of historical and biblical events as well as predictions for the future.

These early mediums, clairvoyants, and psychics, were later cited by channels as precursors to the movements. One of the earliest channels to directly make claims about a discarnate entity speaking through her was Jane Roberts. Roberts was a science-fiction writer who also became the means by which the entity called “Seth” communicated. Described as an “energy essence personality,” Seth wrote numerous books cumulatively called the “Seth Material.” Roberts claimed that in channeling sessions she would enter a trance, and Seth would take complete control of her body. Seth would then dictate his teachings that Roberts’s husband would transcribe. Similar to Spiritualist mediums, Roberts also claimed to have channeled dead celebrities including the impressionist painter, Paul Cézanne. The Seth Material was profoundly influential to the New Age movement and channeling. It acted as a model for future channels, and many channels claimed it helped them awaken their own connections.

Another foundational part of channeling was the book *A Course in Miracles* by Helen Schucman and Bill Thetford. Schucman claimed that in the mid-1960s, an inner voice she identified as Jesus began to dictate teachings to her. She began to record these with the help of Thetford. By 1977, she had received over 1,100 pages of material. In 1971, The Foundation for Inner Peace (or FIP) was established to publish the material that became a worldwide success. By 1975 the first three volumes were available, followed by others. They then added commentaries and teaching guides. Overall, *A Course in Miracles* became an influential series, so much so that one scholar described it as a sacred scripture for the New Age.

By the 1980s, New Age channels became more prevalent, and their notoriety grew. Others became well known for their promotion of New Age channeling including actress Shirley MacLaine. While not claiming to be a psychic herself, MacLaine promoted New Age psychics in her books and in the five-hour TV miniseries adaptation of her autobiography, *Out on a Limb* (1987). In her books MacLaine gave long descriptions of trance channels, their messages, and significance. She also devotes portions of the books to discussing ideas central to the New Age including reincarnation and meditation. Channels she highlights include Kevin Ryerson, who channeled the entities "Tom McPherson" and "John," and the Swedish medium Sture Johansson, who channeled "Ambres." The most successful medium that MacLaine promoted, and arguably the most famous channel in the New Age movement, was JZ Knight who channeled "Ramtha." Over the course of three decades, Knight has created a school, published dozens of books, and brought New Age ideas to the masses.

Another channeling duo who has greatly impacted the New Age movement are Esther and Jerry Hicks. Esther Hicks claims to channel a group of entities collectively named "Abraham." She has authored nine books channeled by Abraham since the mid-1980s. The most significant aspect of the teachings is the Law of Attraction. The Law of Attraction is a belief that by focusing on positive or negative thoughts an individual can manifest positive or negative results. This idea dates back to the 19th century and derives from the New Thought religious movement. However, the Hicks embed the Law of Attraction within the context of New Age teachings. The Hicks were initial partners with Rhonda Byrne and her video, turned book, *The Secret* (2006). However, due to a contractual dispute, they severed their relationship with Byrne. Nevertheless, the channeled ideas provided by the Hicks and Abraham allowed Byrne to turn the Law of Attraction and *The Secret* into a lucrative video and book series.

The New Age movement has diminished considerably since the 1980s. However, channeling or communication with entities is still a common claim by a variety of mediums. Magazines, such as *Sedona Journal of Emergence*, routinely publish the advice and predictions of various channels and their messengers from afar. Moreover, when books like *The Secret* can remain on the *New York Times* best sellers list for years, channels and their message, will continue to be part of the American religious landscape.

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See also: Automatic Writing; Knight, JZ; New Age Movement; Spiritualism

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CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Named after a Greek word meaning "gift," the Charismatic Movement refers to a movement within mainstream Protestant denominations as well as Catholicism that emphasizes speaking in tongues and other spiritual gifts associated with the Holy Spirit. While Charismatic Christians are often discussed alongside Pentecostals, these are two distinct movements. Historically, Pentecostals were those people who pioneered the idea of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. In the early 20th century, they were expelled from mainline denominations and founded their own churches. These are often referred to as "classical Pentecostals." The term "charismatic" was first used in the early 1960s to designate those "neo-Pentecostals" in mainline Protestant and Catholic churches. They also spoke in tongues but did not see tongues as the necessary evidence of the Pentecostal experience. Another similarity is the acceptance of the possibility of demon possession and the willingness to participate in deliverance ministries.

After 1948, there was an explosion of interest in the Pentecostal movement due to the healing ministries of evangelists such as Jack Coe, William Marrion Branham, and Oral Roberts. The television ministry of Oral Roberts brought divine healing into the homes and living rooms of the American people. Many Catholics also attended Roberts's healing ministry and offered donations, causing great concern for the Catholic bishops of New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago.

Prior to 1960, pastors in mainline churches who engaged in speaking in tongues were generally expelled from their churches, thus forcing them to

join a Pentecostal denomination. Additionally, there were probably thousands who either left their churches or kept their Pentecostal experiences secret in order to keep their pulpits. However, hundreds of thousands of laypersons left their more formal churches in favor of Pentecostal services, which featured clapping and dancing as part of the worship service and promised miracles.

Father Richard Winkler of Wheaton, Illinois, was the first pastor of record in a mainline church who had the Pentecostal experience, promoted it, and was allowed to remain in his church. In 1956, Winkler served as rector of Wheaton's Trinity Episcopal Church. A Methodist laymen led him into the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Soon this moved into his church, where they began to experience gifts of the spirit. Speaking in tongues, *glossolalia*, and praying for divine healing occurred there. Soon thereafter, the cover of *Life* magazine featured Winkler and an article about his ministry of exorcism. Consequently, an Episcopal commission conducted an official study of the movement in Wheaton. The report stated that speaking in tongues could be genuine, but it warned of delusion and deception. The report recommended moderation, and this allowed Winkler to remain the rector of the church.

An Episcopalian pastor, Dennis Bennett at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, provided the major breakthrough of Pentecostalism into the mainline churches in 1960. He stood by the validity of his experience, and this led to a media frenzy that ended by creating a new movement in which the followers were given the name "Neo-Pentecostals" (New Pentecostals). After Bennett left St. Marks, he held a successful Pentecostal ministry for two decades at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, Washington.

By the mid-1960s, renewal taking place in the mainline denominations predominantly took the form of neo-Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement were not limited to the denominational setting. There was also a growth of independent congregations, itinerant ministries, and it was represented in Britain through the house church movement.

The Catholic charismatic renewal had its beginnings among the faculty and students of Duquesne University in Pittsburg in 1967. The school was run by the Holy Ghost Fathers. In 1966 two lay theology professors, Ralph Kiefer and Bill Storey, engaged in a spiritual search. This resulted in their receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues. Kiefer and Storey planned a weekend retreat for friends to seek an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church.

About 20 professors, graduate students, and their wives attended the retreat. After an intensive study in Acts, a day devoted to study and prayer, many of the students were ready to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, a birthday party had been planned for one of the priests. Soon, one student after another slipped out of the party and went upstairs to the chapel to pray. Strange things began to happen to these young people as they began to seek the Lord for Pentecostal fullness. A student by the name of David Mangan entered the room and was suddenly "slain in the Spirit," an experience in which a worshipper involuntarily falls prostrate on the floor. Later the entire group joined the prayer meeting, and events familiar to Pentecostals began to take place. Some of them laughed uncontrollably, and one young man rolled across the floor. There was weeping, speaking in tongues, and the shouting of praises to the Lord.

The occurrences at Duquesne soon spread to the University of Notre Dame, including several well-respected members of the theology faculty. Since its inception, the Catholic movement has gained the approval of the church. It has also impacted over 100 million Catholics in 120 countries.

A number of factors led to the Charismatic Renewal. An inter-denominational ecumenical spirit helped lay a foundation where this movement could flourish. An ethos of reconciliation and unity beyond theological and ecclesiastical differences also contributed. Finally, there was an emphasis on the blessings of the Holy Spirit within the ecumenical movement.

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See also: Pentecostalism

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CHINA

Traditional China knew a variety of ways to communicate with the supernatural, ranging from simple prayer and throwing moon blocks (a pair of small blocks of wood shaped like a crescent moon, with a flat and a concave side to get a yes or no from a deity), to dreams and visions. These forms could be practiced without recourse to specialist assistance, but offered little opportunity for two-way contact. Dreams and visions in particular might be quite detailed, but their interpretation was always uncertain. For more direct contact, people might consult experts who were called by many different terms, referred to here as shamans and mediums. These terms are not consistently used in religious studies, and they also do not correspond neatly to Chinese equivalents. Moreover, common Chinese terms such as *wu* may refer to different kinds of religious specialists. The term "shaman" is used here to refer to figures who travel to another world or dimension of existence in trance, but without being possessed. The medium, on the other hand, serves as a vehicle for supernatural beings. The medium will change behavior in various ways to show that he or she has really become someone else—for instance, changing the voice and using a different kind of language, walking differently, and so on. For example, if the medium is possessed by a general he or she may enact riding a horse. This state is temporary and largely controllable by the medium, unlike involuntary possession, in which a demonic presence must be exorcised by a medium, Buddhist or Daoist priest, or another type of ritual specialist. While similar, the shaman and the medium differ fundamentally in terms of the cultural construction of their roles. In Chinese tradition, the medium is much better documented, but the shaman does exist, and the concomitant belief in soul travel has exerted considerable influence on the development of Daoist religious culture.

For many centuries, the socio-religious significance of spirit possession in China has been overlooked by the socio-educational elite who have produced most of the sources available to historians. This attitude was continued in the 20th century by Chinese, Japanese, and Western researchers alike. The Chinese stereotype is that shamans and mediums are either religious customs of the distant past or limited to the so-called ethnic minorities. This is certainly not true; however, Chinese language research on mediums and shamans focuses on ethnic minorities rather than the Han majority. As a result there is only a limited body of reliable information on what once was an important socio-religious phenomenon among the Han Chinese as well, both in terms of historical information and ethnographic descriptions.

Since the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, shamans and mediums have been actively persecuted in mainland China, especially practitioners with a Han-Chinese ethnic background. The communist state fears the potential of charismatic mediums to build a large personal following and thereby create different forms of unrest. Similar phenomena among the ethnic minorities are more easily contained locally and therefore regarded as less threatening. Currently the state may tolerate individual practitioners, but only as long as they do not become overly popular.

Concrete evidence regarding the ritual practices of shamans or mediums is scarce in the early periods of Chinese history, at least until the Han dynasties (202 BCE–9 CE and 25–220 CE). While the most common term that can be translated as shaman or medium (*wu*) can be encountered frequently, this indicates only that ritual specialists existed, not how they practiced. That some of these specialists were understood to be possessed by divine beings, however, is certain. It is not clear whether they were always possessed when they performed such ritual functions as healing, fortune telling, exorcism, and sacrifice. This lack of information remains a problem in later sources as well. It is known that during funerary ceremonies the deceased could be impersonated (through possession) by a young male relative, but this was always a one-time event. Whatever the details of their performance, it is clear that the people denoted by the term (*wu*) were initially highly respected and politically influential. By the time of the Han dynasty their status had decreased, but here there is a problem of interpretation, since the term *wu* is used rather broadly. During the ensuing Period of Disunion (221–589 CE), there is a differentiation of ritual specialists into different categories, leading to a more restricted use of the term *wu* for possession specialists. At the same time, their descent in social status continued, but later anecdotal and ethnographic evidence indicates that they continued to be influential on a village and eventually mostly on a familial and individual level. One possibility is that this decreasing status was accompanied by a shift in gender from male to female mediums. From the Song dynasty onwards, mediums were no longer accepted in higher political circles, and only the Manchu rulers of the Qing (1645–1911 CE) would again practice a shamanic (but not mediumistic) cult within the court. This cult was of Tungusic origin and entirely confined to their own ethnic group.

A good indication of the ubiquity of mediums and their cults by the Period of Disunion, and undoubtedly before as well, comes from the frequent

attacks and disparaging remarks by Daoist writers at the time, who complain about such things as dancing and singing, bloody sacrifice, or men and demons (i.e., deities) intermingling. This last kind of comment appears to be an implicit reference to possession. In the famous cult of Jiang Ziwen, at the southern capital near modern Nanjing, mediums played a crucial role in communicating between the deity and his followers, including the imperial court. Mediums could see ghosts or demons, practice sacrificial rituals, do exorcisms, pray for rain, and so forth. They could also be suspected of black magic. They formed the stratum of traditional religious experts against which the Daoists and Buddhists then reacted and which they slowly, but never completely supplanted.

Although Daoist critics of the Period of Disunion inveighed greatly against mediums, the Maoshan movement, the principal new Daoist movement of the era, was directly created by a medium. This medium, Yang Xi (330–386 CE), was possessed by a series of higher order immortals who communicated through him with his clients. The group would have thought of their practices as completely unproblematic, because their possession practices were civilized through the absence of dancing and bloody sacrifices as well as the crucial importance of calligraphy in producing a record. Moreover, the movement did not institutionalize an ongoing practice of access to a supernatural dimension through possessed individuals. Nonetheless, it originated from a series of revelations obtained through possession rather than dreams or visions. Its background was among the social elite of the southern Chinese capital region.

This was hardly the last big movement in which possession played a crucial role. The Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace was a movement in which the visionary Hong Xiuquan sought to replace Chinese religions with his form of Christianity. Xiuquan’s movement began in the 1840s and culminated in the bloody Taiping Rebellion from 1853–1864 CE. Xiuquan’s first revelation happened through a vision or series of visions after he failed the civil service exams. He claimed to have visited Heaven where he was recognized as the younger brother of Jesus Christ. Although historians have called this experience a vision, it could equally well be labeled as a case of shamanic soul travel. Several subsequent leaders of the movement claimed to be possessed by God and Jesus Christ respectively. Thanks to these recurrent possessions they acquired considerable power, and the movement even printed a fascinating record of their communications. During the Boxer

rebellion of 1900, participants also received instructions from local spirit medium cults to which they belonged. Thus, the present communist state's fear of charismatic mediums is based on historical precedent.

Until the Song period, it seems from the scattered evidence in poems and anecdotes, as well as polemical attacks by the elite, that local mediums or shamans (we usually do not know which form of contact with the supernatural world they maintained) may still have been powerful figures in local village society, but this seems to become less afterward. They increasingly become advisors to families and individuals rather than being involved in local leadership. In the Song and Yuan periods, Daoist priests would enlist young boys as mediums to help them see spirits during their rituals, namely the dead and demons. Whether this practice continued later is unclear. The social descent of mediums and shamans probably was never complete, but here more research is needed. In the late 16th century, for instance, the daughter of a prominent intellectual could still become the medium of a Daoist immortal around which a male group of elite adherents then formed.

At the same time that mediums and shamans lost social status, spirit writing became increasingly important among the educated elite. Traditionally, higher order deities and immortals were thought to write in a cosmic script unreadable to humankind. This only led to a direct form of communication from the Song (960–1276 CE) onward, when it came to be believed that some of them might descend into special writing objects. These were never the same gods that would possess mediums and could be worshipped in local cults. They were usually called immortals and often had a Daoist background. From the late Ming (1368–1644 CE) onward the educated elite regularly formed groups around spirit writing cults, which were considered completely respectable forms of contact with the supernatural world long into the modern age. Since the 18th century, increasing literacy among the male (and more recently also the female) population has made these practices more popular. They still flourish in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and to an unknown degree in mainland China. Since the Song, important religious writings have been revealed by means of spirit writing. Prominent immortals in these cults are Daoist figures such as Lü Dongbin and the immensely popular, but not necessarily Daoist, Emperor Guan.

Besides these spirit writing cults, there is substantial data about mediums

and shamans in southern China, as well as mediums in northern China. For many centuries, local people in northern China (well-attested for Han Chinese in the modern provinces of Jilin, Liaoning, Hebei, Henan, and Shandong) have worshipped one or more of the so-called “Five Household Immortals.” These are the fox, weasel, hedgehog, snake, and rat, who live on the margins between the natural world (or the wild, as it would be termed traditionally) and our human world. They become immortals after a sufficiently long period of self-cultivation, enabling them to take on human form. Importantly, they may descend into real humans, speaking (as well as listening) through them. Stories of direct contact between such immortals, especially foxes (both male and female) and humans have been common for centuries. A medium establishes a long-term relationship with the same immortal, who provides all kinds of healing and advisory services to local families and individuals but never to entire communities. The animals are worshipped in small shrines and rarely in proper temples. Each of these immortals is a unique individual with a specific local sphere of influence, even if they all belong to the same group of small animals.

The *tang-ki* are a spectacular example of spirit possession. Their practices are well-attested for the Fujianese speaking cultural zone, both inside China, Taiwan and of old in Overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. There is evidence that they also existed traditionally elsewhere in China (such as Huizhou or the Lower Yangzi region). Some *tang-ki* beat themselves with fierce-looking weapons until they bleed profusely, or they put skewers through their cheeks. A common explanation is that their ability not to feel the pain proves that they are possessed. Another interpretation is that blood provides additional life force, making them particularly strong vehicles for the divine voice speaking through them.

Much less known than mediums who are possessed by deities or immortals are shamans who travel to other supernatural worlds. Nevertheless, individual people might visit the underworld in a kind of near-death experience and return afterwards to tell about it, and some shamans do so on a regular basis. In the Fujianese and Cantonese cultural zones female shamans visit the world of the unborn child, called the Flower Gardens. In this world there would be pot plants with red and/or white colored flowers and flower buds. Whereas the plants represent the uterus of the mother, the flowers and buds represent her present and future children respectively. The shaman visits this garden in order to ascertain the future sex of the unborn

child. If a girl is predicted, there is the possibility of a ritual in order to change its sex.

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See also: Automatic Writing; Buddhism; Daoism; Mongolia; Shamanism; Tibet

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Related Primary Document: Wang Chong, "On Exorcism (Chieh-chu)" (Chinese, First Century CE)

Wang Chong (Wang Ch'ung) (25–100 CE) was a philosopher of the Eastern Han dynasty. He wrote on many topics, including physics, literature, and ethics. He often expressed materialist views and was skeptical of the "superstitious" practices of his day. His essay "On Exorcism" appears in the Lunheng *(Balanced Discourse), a collection of his writings. Wang Chong suggests that exorcism is an illogical waste of resources and advocates virtue and statecraft rather than supernaturalism as a way of dealing with evil. However, in critiquing these practices, he provides a picture of the culture of exorcism common in first century China.*

The world places confidence in sacrifices saying that they who offer them may be sure to become happy; and likewise it gives its approbation to exorcisms, pretending that these remove evil. The first ceremony performed at exorcising is the setting out of a sacrifice, which we may compare with an

entertainment of guests among living men; and after the savoury food has been set out hospitably for their entertainment and they have eaten of it, they are chased away with swords and sticks! If these spirits have knowledge of such treatment, they surely will stand their ground, accept the fight, and refuse to go; and if they are susceptible to indignation, they would merely cause misfortune; and if they have no knowledge, they cannot possibly cause any evil. Accordingly exorcising is lost labour, and no harm is caused by its omission.

Besides it is disputed whether spirits have a material form. Admitting that they have form, it must be that of a living man, and as a living man is susceptible to indignation, they certainly will (if exorcised) do harm to man. But if they have no material shape, driving them away is like driving out vapour and clouds: clouds and vapour cannot be expelled. And since it cannot even be ascertained whether they have a shape, we are not in a position to guess their feelings. For what purpose do spirits gather in human dwellings? If disposed to murder, they will, when exorcised, simply abscond and hide themselves, but return as soon as the chase is over. And if they occupy our homes without murderous purposes, they will not be injurious, even though not expelled.

When a man of high position is going out, and the crowd flocks to the spot to see him, filling up the street, then, when those who thronged to the front are driven away by his lictors, they will hurry back, but as soon as the lictors retire, they will return to the place where they stood; the lictors cannot keep them off except by keeping watch for the whole day. What then is our conclusion? If those who, eager to be among the spectators, come back unless driven away for good, so also spirits — if they are like men — will, if they desire to occupy a house, act just as such inquisitive spectators. The lookers-on do not retire unless the lictors, after driving them away, keep watch for a long time; likewise, if exorcists do not do their work the whole year round, spectres do not go. They are cast out after they have finished their meal; but if those ejected spectres thereupon come back, how shall we repulse them?

When grain is being dried in the yard, and fowls and sparrows pick it up, they decamp as soon as the owner chases them or throws anything at them, but no sooner does he leave them alone than they come back; they will not be kept in check unless he keeps watch the whole day. If spectres have spiritual power, they will neither be expelled by exorcism, nor hindered; and should they have no such power, they, like fowls and sparrows, will not be kept in

check unless driven away incessantly.

Should a tiger or wolf break into the capital, archers will surround the beast; they may kill it, but cannot do away with the evil which caused the beast to come. And when rebels or robbers assail a city and are attacked by government troops, these may repel them, but cannot possibly annul the ill which caused their coming. Tigers and wolves come because government is neglectful of its duties; rebels and robbers appear when sedition is rife among the people; and spirits crowd together because the lives of men are drawing to a close. Now the most complete system of exorcism and expulsion of spirits can no more ensure banishment of misfortune and prolongation of lives than the killing of tigers or wolves can undo the effects of misgovernment, or the repulse of rebels can produce good rule among the people.

When a man is extremely ill and sees spectres approach, if of a courageous disposition he will brandish a sword or grasp a stick and fight them; — but after one or two engagements he drops his hands and submits to his fate, realizing that otherwise he will have to struggle ceaselessly. The spectres driven away by exorcism do not differ from those which sick people see, nor do exorcisms differ from fights; consequently, just as a sick man fights and yet the spectres do not go, so houseowners may expel spectres, but, beyond all doubt, they do not leave. We may then ask: of what practical use is it to cleanse a house of spectres? And even admitting that misfortune is removed by it, exorcism is of no use, for indeed, the beings which we exorcise are spectres abiding in our homes as guests. The household gods are twelve in number: the Blue Dragon, the White Tiger, and ten more. That Dragon, Tiger and other valiant gods are celestial spirits fitting in the Universal Order, so that (where they are) neither flying *shi*, nor flowing *hiung* [both terms indicate ghosts who cause disease] venture wantonly to gather, any more than evil-disposed lodgers pluck up courage to plot against their host if he is brave and strong. When the twelve gods allow spectres to dwell in a house, and the owner casts these out, I say that he chases away the guests of the twelve gods and irritates the latter: is this a way to ensure happiness? If the twelve gods are not present, it is because there are no flying *shi* and no flowing *hiung*; against what then, in the absence of gods and of evil, is the aid of exorcism use? What then is thereby expelled?

Exorcism is a ceremonial institution transmitted from ancient times for the purpose of expelling pestilence. Chwen-süh [a mythic emperor of the twenty-sixth century BCE] had three sons, who died at their birth; one took

up his abode in the waters of the Kiang (Yang-tszĕ) and became the fever-demon; one dwelled in Joh-shui and became the *wang-liang* demon, and the third settled in nooks and corners for the dissemination of pestilence among men. This is the reason why at the end of the year, when mankind kept holiday, the spectres of pestilence were driven out (of the houses) and happiness was imported by sending away the old and bringing in the new. This has been imitated by every generation, and called exorcism into existence; but even that expulsion of pestilence is quite out of place as a ceremonial institution.

Indeed, the virtues of Yao and Shun [noble emperors praised by Confucius] must be cultivated, then the world under heaven will enjoy general peace and rest, and all calamities whatsoever will be dissipated and annihilated; then, even though plague be not driven away, plague-spectres will not stay. But if rulers behave like a Kieh and a Cheu [notoriously wicked emperors], the world between the seas will be disturbed by rebellions, and hundreds of misfortunes will spring up all at once; and then we may drive away pestilence every day, yet the spectres which cause it will nevertheless make their appearance. It is decaying generations which cherish a belief in spectres; it is a foolish humanity which is bent on seeking happiness (by exorcism). The last generations of the Cheu dynasty believed in spectres, and offered sacrifices in order to find happiness and help; their foolish rulers, whose minds were misled, did not take heed to their own behaviour, and as their good acts grew more infrequent, the more unstable became their thrones. The conclusion is, that man has his own happiness in his own hands, and that it is not in the hands of spectres, being determined by his virtues, not by his sacrifices.

Excerpted from J. J. M. Groot, The Religious System of China, *Vol. 6. Leiden: Brill, 1892.*

CHOD

“Chod” is an abbreviation for the Tibetan phrase “dud kyi chod yul,” which means “severance of the demonic object(s).” This full name is used far less often than the single word “chod.” While it is mainly associated with Tibet, chod has been a widespread Buddhist practice for centuries throughout the Himalayan regions. The phrase “severance of the demonic” points to chod’s

usage in exorcism. However, along with taming spirits, chod is considered a powerful Buddhist practice and a method by which enlightenment can be attained.

Among the myriad forms of Tibetan Buddhist practice, chod is unique. It seems to be the only "legitimate" practice that originated in Tibet: before approximately 1200 CE, a practice generally had to be traceable to an Indian lineage in order to be considered authentic. Moreover, chod was developed and spread by a woman, Machik Labdron (c. 1050–1150 CE); Machik is one of very few women credited with developing a Buddhist practice.

Chod has become popular throughout the world for mixing the beautiful with the macabre. It includes singing while playing a hand drum (*damaru*) and bell, occasionally using a *kangling*, a trumpet that is ideally made from a human femur. Despite this seemingly morbid focus, chod melodies are often beautiful.

A man blows a trumpet made of a human thigh bone inlaid with jewels. The trumpet is one of the traditional ritual objects used in chod. (Shaoching H. Chuan/National Geographic Society/Corbis)

A Tibetan nun named Choying Drolma won several music awards, all for recordings based on her chod practice.

Even today, Tibet and the Himalayan regions are considered to be full of spirits called “lhadud,” literally “god-demons,” each with its own domain. When spirits help, they are venerated as gods (*lha*). When they cause troubles such as disease and flooding, they are regarded as demons (*dud*). Chod is considered one way to expel the demonic side of these spirits.

In general, when practicing chod, one begins with the necessary Buddhist preliminary of taking refuge in the Buddha, his teachings (*dharma*), and the Buddhist community (*sangha*) then arousing compassion for all beings. The practitioner then beckons the “guests.” These can include all beings, but the focus is on malignant entities. In exorcisms, the main guests are those specific problem-causing spirits. Buddhas and bodhisattvas are also invited to the feast of the practitioner’s body.

The next phase of practice is the transference of consciousness (*phowa*) called “Opening the Sky-Door.” The practitioner visualizes her consciousness exiting from the crown of her head, uniting with a deity above—usually a divinized form of chod’s founder Machik or a goddess called Troma Nagmo (“Black Wrathful One”). The practitioner can then see her own dead body below. While continuing to sing and play instruments, the practitioner (visualized as the deity) cuts off the top of her own former skull, which grows and serves as a bowl. She then chops up her former body, placing it in the skull. Through various rituals, the practitioner purifies the skull and bodily remains, and enlarges them such that it could feed the entire world. She transforms the body into divine nectar (*amrita*), offers it to Buddhas, and then transforms them again into whatever the guests desire. The practice concludes with a dedication of merit, and the visualization dissolves; the practitioner is “herself” again. If successful, the troubling demon is pacified through being fed the practitioner’s transformed body.

Chod is a powerful method for eliminating attachment. Advanced chod practitioners might seek out frightening places. This reflects an important teaching in chod: “Approach what you find repulsive; help those you think you cannot help. Go to places that scare you. Find the Buddha inside yourself.” This also expresses a central point of Mahāyāna Buddhism: phenomena are “empty” (*shunya*): all things are composites dependent on other factors and devoid of any essential element. Gradually, hopes and fears decrease, leading a practitioner toward enlightenment.

The chod tradition identifies four types of demons, all of which are rooted in attachment and pride. The first, “material demons” describes spirits such as

lhadud who are out to harm or cut short one's life, in the context of Buddhist practice, attachment to pleasure is also considered a "material demon." A second type is the "immaterial demons." This refers mainly to doubt and fear. A chod practitioner facing this demon may give up practice or seriously doubt that it will accomplish anything. "Immaterial demons" also include the rejection of interdependence, a fundamental Buddhist concept. The third type, the "demon of exaltation," arises when a practitioner is tempted to exalt in her high level of realization, thereby increasing her pride and ego rather than severing them. Finally, the "demon of inflation" is deeply linked with the first of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths: "There is always suffering" (*sarvam dukham*). This demon arises from the suffering caused by the fact that events in life do not always turn out as one wants or plans. It is the friction between our assumptions and hopes, on the one hand, and the actual happenings of the world, on the other, that causes us to suffer.

Chod is a practice for taming demons, haunting spirits, or diseases, but it also helps eliminate that most malicious demon (from a Buddhist perspective)—one's own ego, which binds beings to the endless cycle of rebirth (*samsara*). Some people are attracted to the macabre aspects of chod, such as chopping up one's own body and using a human thigh bone as a trumpet. But many are also attracted to the beauty and intensity of the practice. Chod practice directly confronts the dark reality that the most malicious demons of all reside within: they are nothing but our own attachments, misconception, and arrogance.

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See also: Buddhism; Tibet

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CONVERSION DISORDER

"Conversion disorder" refers to a phenomenon in which someone—

usually a young woman—exhibits symptoms of illness and uncontrollable behavior for no clear medical reason. Symptoms may include incessant twitching, seizure-like convulsions, fever, nausea, and fainting spells. In some cases, patients have been paralyzed for months at a time. Medical and neurological tests reveal nothing wrong, and it does not appear that the individual is feigning illness. There have been cases where conversion disorder appears contagious, spreading from one girl throughout a peer group. Outbreaks of mass conversion disorder are not isolated to specific regions. Tens and perhaps hundreds of such cases have occurred in the last 30 years alone on nearly every continent. Studies of these outbreaks note similarities to historical accounts of mass possession and bewitchment. This suggests that conversion disorder may be a psychological phenomenon that in other times was interpreted as demonic possession.

A particularly widespread case occurred from 2006 to 2007 in a Catholic boarding school for impoverished girls in Chalco, Mexico. 512 girls were affected as well as one teacher and several nuns. Affected individuals experienced elevated temperatures and fever-like symptoms, diarrhea, nausea, and migraine headaches. Many reported pain in their knees, which "creaked," "throbbed," or bent involuntarily. The pain made walking difficult and, in some cases, impossible.

A case from 2011 to 2012 in Le Roy, New York, drew national media attention. Fifteen girls began suffering from uncontrollable twitching and seizures, triggering a community-wide panic. Unlike Chalco, those afflicted at Le Roy were neither devoutly religious nor socially isolated. They were typical students at a public high school. In both cases, scientists could find no physical cause for the symptoms.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), a compendium of known mental disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association, defines conversion disorder as a mental illness. The label "conversion" refers to the hypothesis that anxiety is "converted" into physical symptoms. Giving a physical expression to mental stress may reduce anxiety or keep the patient from realizing their state of psychological conflict. This interpretation is indebted to Sigmund Freud's theory of hysteria. However, mass epidemics of conversion disorder such as those at Chalco and Le Roy are still poorly understood.

Modern cases of mass conversion disorder offer historians new insights into early modern accounts of demonic possession, such as the bewitched

girls of the Salem Witch Trials or the possessed nuns of the Loudun convent. Although it is impossible to prove that these accounts are describing the same phenomenon reported in Chalco and Le Roy, there is a shared pattern in which individuals exhibit deviant behavior, they are accused to feigning their symptoms, and finally authorities arrive at a way of interpreting their behavior. Because the supernatural is beyond the purview of historical inquiry, it has often been assumed that early modern people were simply feigning the symptoms of bewitchment or possession. Modern cases of mass conversion disorder suggest these people really did experience their symptoms. Moreover, this connection demonstrates that early modern cases of mass possession were not unique to the era but part of a persistent pattern of social behavior.

Laura Hatchman

See also: Loudun Possessions; Psychological Interpretations

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CROWLEY, ALEISTER

Born Edward Alexander Crowley (1875–1941), the son of a brewer, Crowley adopted the name Aleister early in life as well as the moniker The Great Beast. The latter, a reference to the biblical book of Revelation, was given to him by his mother because he was such a difficult child. His family were pious fundamentalist Christians. This led Crowley to rebel against his family's Christianity and adopt an anti-Christian attitude he maintained for the rest of his life.

In the late 1890s, Crowley became acquainted with a society of magicians called the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn located in London. Here he

began to learn occultism. His lessons included the evocation and invocation of spirits, demons, and other entities. He studied under the order's best teachers, Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers and Allan Bennett. In 1900, the members of the Golden Dawn had a disagreement with the leaders of the organization, and it dissolved. The fallout from this dissolution was the formation of a number of smaller societies and orders. One of these was created by Crowley, called the Order of the Silver Star, or the Argenteum Astrum (A.A.). Crowley envisioned his A.A. to be an advanced training ground for powerful magicians to learn occultism and magick (the addition of the "k" to the term was to differentiate it from stage magic). Over the next three decades, he had numerous students; lived an extravagant, unconventional, and outrageous life; and developed a new religious philosophy called Thelema.

Integral to Crowley's magical practices were the evocation and invocation of spiritual entities. One of the earliest series of experiments he attempted was with the 72 demons of the Goetia. These demons were purportedly used by King Solomon to build his temple and then captured in a brass vessel only later to be released. Crowley used a manuscript from the Golden Dawn to evoke these spirits into the "triangle of art" while he stayed safely inside a magical circle. He theorized that the spirits themselves were not real but just externalized aspects of his subconscious mind made real by his imagination. This did not mean that the spirits were powerless. To the contrary, if his mind believed they were powerful, then they were and thus could pose a danger. However, as time passed and he practiced more and more spirit evocation, he began to change his mind and became convinced that the entities he interacted with were very real and existed outside his mind.

Crowley in 1911 with Thelemic ritual paraphernalia including his wand, bell, sword, cup, phial of holy Abra-Melin oil. His hand rests on the Stele of Revealing. The book is *The Book of the Law*. He is crowned with the Egyptian Ureaus serpent and upon his finger is the ring of Nuit. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

In 1904 in Cairo, Egypt, while on an extended honeymoon with his wife Rose, Crowley performed an invocation of the Egyptian god Horus. The result was that over the course of three days in April, he received a channeled text from an entity calling itself Aiwass. This entity dictated to him a short book that was later called *Liber AL vel Legis* or *The Book of the Law*. At first this text was of little significance to Crowley. However, over the next few years he realized it was very important, so important, in fact, that it became the central text for the religious-philosophical system he founded called Thelema, named after the Greek word for "will."

Other systems of invocation and evocation Crowley practiced included the Enochian system of magic developed by John Dee, the court astrologer of England's Queen Elizabeth I; Greek, Egyptian, and Roman deities; as well as other entities that suited Crowley's needs. The Enochian system Crowley examined was originally created John Dee and Edward Kelley in the 16th century. Dee wanted to explore the meaning of the Book of Revelation, and so he invoked a hierarchy of angels. The angels communicated to Dee's assistant, Kelley, through a crystal ball. Dee wrote down everything told to him by the angels. However, after Dee's death, most of his writings were

destroyed by a mob fearing he had been in communication with Satan. Crowley had copies of what remained of Dee's writings, and he used them to explore the Enochian spirit world described by Kelley. Crowley published the results of these explorations as a book entitled *The Vision and the Voice*.

Over his life, Crowley interacted with a large variety of non-human entities. In all cases, he did not recklessly invoke the entities without taking what he considered proper magical precautions. Moreover, Crowley believed that the universe operated in a very specific way and that it was organized by an elaborate system of correspondences. This organization was based on an adaptation of the Jewish Kabbalah. Thus, when Crowley invoked an entity, such as Amalantrah, through a series of rituals he performed in 1918, he would ask the entity a series of questions and examine the responses. Crowley believed that it was easy for malevolent entities to impersonate other entities. But questions based on the system of correspondences would allow Crowley to detect if the entity was attempting to deceive him and masquerade as something else. Thus, part of Crowley's magical system required memorization of a massive amount of names, symbols, foreign letters and languages, and their corresponding relationships. It was with this in mind that, in 1917, Crowley wrote that users of the Ouija board should not just randomly speak to and believe any entity that happens to respond. Instead, they should question the entity based on the system of correspondence that Crowley believed was universal and demand it speak the truth or be dismissed.

Ultimately, Crowley believed that it was through the interaction of individuals and discarnate entities that society would advance as a whole. As such, he spent his whole life advancing his occult ideals and documenting his interactions with noncorporal beings. Crowley died in 1947. However, today most of his work is in print and available on the Internet. His ideas and practices were rediscovered in the 1960s, and his work was integral to the occult revival of the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, his interaction was an inspiration to a variety of writers, artists, musicians, actors, and even founders of other religions.

John L. Crow

See also: Channeling; Ouija Board

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D

DAIMON

The word "*daimon*" (plural *daimones*) comes from ancient Greece and the Hellenistic world, where it referred to a type of lesser god or spirit. Its meaning evolved over time to refer as much to an inner psychic force as to a literal spirit. In Western thought, the concept of the *daimon* merged into the related concepts of the demons and demonic possession. Its adjectival form, *daimonic*, has been used in modern-day depth psychology to refer to subconscious aspects of the psyche that that can overwhelm the ego resulting in outbursts of either creativity or destructive behavior.

In Homeric literature, the difference between gods (*theoi*) and *daimones* is vague. Walter Burkert characterizes *daimones* as referring to a mode of interaction with indistinct supernatural forces and a necessary complement to the Homeric notion of gods as individuals with personal characteristics. *Daimones* were generally regarded as invisible although the Pythagoreans claimed that they could see and hear them. Some *daimones* were regarded as local gods, connected to certain places. Others were thought to be spirits of the dead. Hesiod wrote that when the heroes of the Golden Age died out, Zeus transformed them into *daimones*. Many Hellenistic grave inscriptions describe the deceased as a *daimon*. In *The Symposium*, Socrates explains that *daimones* facilitate exchange between mortals and the gods, taking prayers and sacrifices to the gods and bestowing supernatural power to mortals. They affect people both in daily life and in dreams and all prophecy, and magic occurs through their work. Socrates explains that there are numerous kinds of *daimones* and that love (*eros*) is a particularly powerful one.

There was also a belief that everyone has a personal *daimon* assigned to them at birth. The personal *daimon* is associated with fate and often resembles a conscience or a guardian angel. In Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, Socrates describes what he calls his *daimonion* or "divine sign" that acts as an "inner voice" and guides his decisions. Socrates's *daimonion* became confounded with the notion of *daimon*, such that by the 18th century the Catholic monk Antoine Augustin Calmet wrote on whether Socrates was guided by a demon. Plato's student Xenocrates further categorized *daimones*

into good (*eudaimones*) and evil (*kakodaimones*) types.

In the first and second centuries CE, *daimones* increasingly came to be seen as malevolent. Pagan philosophers framed the gods as transcendent and the immanent *daimones* as base and evil. Christian apologists went further to claim that all the pagan gods were actually demons. Finally, exorcism became an increasingly popular practice in the Hellenistic world among Jews, Christians, and pagans. New Testament Greek generally used the word *daimon* to refer to evil or morally ambivalent entities. These references became the Latinized as "daemon," which in turn became the English "demon."

The older notion of *daimones* as "inner voices" was revived in the modern era by depth psychology. Carl Jung invoked the term *daimon* in describing his theories of forces at work in the subconscious. Moreover, he claimed in his autobiography— whether with a literal or metaphorical intent is difficult to say—that he himself had been possessed by a *daimon* throughout the majority of his career. Similarly, the existential psychologist Rollo May made the idea of "the daimonic" a centerpiece of his system, defining it as any natural function that has the capacity to take over and dominate the entire person, thus resulting in "daimonic possession," by which he meant not a supernatural invasion but a natural imbalance that could, in extreme cases, mimic the ancient descriptions of spirit possession. Slightly later, the archetypal psychologist James Hillman developed his own system around the central idea of the *daimon* in its ancient Platonic guise as the keeper and pattern of a person's individual character, whose nature often emerges in the form of negative "symptoms" when its basic desires are not being met by the specific circumstances of a person's life.

Matt Cardin

See also: Antiquity; New Testament; Psychological Interpretations

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DANCING MANIA

Dancing Mania, also known as imitative chorea, St. Vitus's dance, or St. John's disease, was a phenomenon that occurred in mainland Europe between the 14th and 17th centuries in which large numbers of people would engage in continuous and uncontrollable dancing. Dancing would last for days and even months, sometimes until the dancers died from exhaustion. There was debate during the outbreaks as to whether the dancing had a natural or supernatural cause. In some cases, the dancing was attributed to demonic possession, and exorcisms were attempted on the dancers.

Sufferers from Saint Vitus's Dance making a pilgrimage near Luxembourg in hope of a cure, 1500s. Hand-colored woodcut. (North Wind Picture Archive)

The largest and best documented cases of dancing mania occurred in Germany, but there were also reports of the phenomenon in France, Italy, Holland, and Luxembourg. One of the first major outbreaks occurred in Aachen, Germany in 1374. In that outbreak the dance was attributed to a curse unleashed by Satan. A monk records that some of the dancers called out

the names of demons. Dancers sought the help of exorcists and travelled to saint shrines in search of a cure. In 1518 an outbreak occurred in Strasbourg, Germany, in which 400 men, women, and children were afflicted, and dozens of dancers died from exhaustion. The Strasbourg dancing plague was attributed to a curse placed by Saint Vitus, and dancers travelled to the saint's shrine seeking a cure. A German physician records that by the end of the 16th century the dancing had become almost institutionalized. Certain people would contract the dancing mania every June and travel either to the chapel of Saint Vitus or Saint John the Baptist. There, they would be cured until the following year.

Educated observers of dancing mania, including the physician Paracelsus, regarded the dancing as a type of sickness. Some advocated playing music to help the disease run its course. Modern interpreters have suggested the dancing was actually a performance of suppressed pre-Christian religious rituals or the result of ergotism. More recently, historians have suggested that dancing mania, like European incidences of mass possession, were a "mass psychogenic illness" brought on by stress. Historians note that the episode in 1374 was preceded by catastrophic floods and that the 1518 incident was preceded by devastating famine and plague. In this theory, stress manifested in behavior that was uncontrollable but also rooted in cultural understandings of how the world works. This theory explains why dancing mania died out: as European cultures ceased to believe or think about the phenomenon, stress was expressed through a different set of behaviors. However, there were likely multiple factors that contributed to dancing mania. While some dancers may have been experiencing profound stress, others may have had more serious mental illnesses, a desire to imitate others, or found the dancing preferable to work and other duties.

Southern Italy is home to a related phenomenon known as tarantism. Tarantism takes its name from the wolf spider. Uncontrollable dancing was attributed to spider bites. The condition was sometimes described as poisoning, other times as possession by the spider. Music was played to encourage the dancing because it was believed that without dancing those afflicted would succumb to the venom. A more institutionalized form of tarantism occurred on June 29, the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. In the town of Galentina, Italy, those affected would dance to the chapel of Saint Paul where a paroxysm of dancing would cure them until the following year. Tarantism was first reported in the 11th century and become common in the

16th and 17th centuries. Tarantism developed into modern folk dancing festivals that are still held in Southern Italy.

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See also: Conversion Disorder; Ergotism

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DAOISM

Daoism is a religious and philosophical system from China that emphasizes harmony with nature. Its roots are often traced to Laozi (600 BCE), the originator of the *Dao De Jing*, the principal text of Daoism. Daoist cosmology regards the physical and spiritual worlds as intertwined rather than separate. Historically Daoist priests acted as intermediaries between the world of the living and the dead.

Daoism values longevity and regards physical health as an extension of a person's moral and spiritual well-being. According to the earliest Daoist texts, spirit possession is the main cause of physical and mental disease. Numerous methods and examples of spirit possession and exorcism are prevalent in texts from the School of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi) and Laozi to the Heavenly Masters Orthodox Unity Daoism (*Tianshi Zhengyi Dao*) of Zhang Dao Ling, who established the first formal practice of Daoism in the Eastern Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). In addition to providing medicinal treatment for the living, Daoist priests would guide newly deceased spirits into the world of the dead. It was believed that those who died in an unnatural way and failed to receive appropriate death rituals would become demons that disturbed the living. Funerary rites ensured the dead would not trouble the living.

Exorcism was considered a treatment of last resort, employed only if the

illness or possession could not be resolved through nutrition, medicinal treatment, or emotional and spiritual counseling. Thus, Daoist exorcists also commonly served as physicians, employing herbal prescriptions, acupuncture, and ritually treated water to expel demons and vengeful spirits that invaded the body.

The use of oracle bones during the Shang dynasty (1600–1050 BCE), demonstrates the common belief that illness derived from one of three sources: either from the spirits of one's close relatives, from the evil energies of restless ghosts who died prematurely, or demons. The notion that ancestors and demon possession were the source of illness continued into the Han dynasty, where the belief appears in the Daoist "Scriptures of the Great Peace," *Taiping Jing* (184 CE). The principle of "inherited guilt" (*chengfu*, was widespread, and posits that if one has an untimely death without having paid a debt or rectified a misdeed, the debt will pass to one's immediate descendants.

In addition to carrying the unpaid burdens of one's ancestors, Daoists believed that the human body contains many spirits that affect one's spiritual being and susceptibility to spirit possession. Although the body is believed to house thousands of spirits, the main spirits of the body are the *hun* (celestial souls) and the *po* (terrestrial souls) spirits. The five viscera or internal organs of the body are where the *hun* and the *po* reside. The Han dynasty "Pulse Classic" (*Maijing*) states that when the *hun* and *po* leave the body, their absence creates a vacancy that is vulnerable to evil spirits (*xieshen*) that instantly take up residence and cause ghost infestations. Master Ge Hong's *Baopozi* (317–318 CE) contained treatments such as "Prescriptions for Treating Ghost Infestation" to expel ancestral or external evil ghosts that take up residence in the body. Such infestations are believed to remedy multiple demons that cause so much havoc that they had the ability to annihilate the host's entire family.

Daoists also referred to the *hun* souls of the living body as the "three corpses" (*Sanshi*) that on certain days of the year, report a person's misdeeds to the Director of Destiny (*Si ming*). The Director of Destiny determined how much of a person's lifespan would be shortened as a result of the living person's misdeeds. A group of immortal beings in the "Hall of Light" (*Mingtang*) examined such transgressions, and if found guilty, the spirit officials of the Greater Yin (underworld) rendered punishment upon the living individual and inflicted illness upon him. Ancestral ghosts often

haunted the living individual as a way to plead for the transgressor to confess or rectify his misdeeds.

The rites of exorcism coincided with healing and the practice of medicine, especially in the Heavenly Masters Sect of Zhang Dao Ling, the inheritor of the school of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi. The sect was named after "spirit generals" called The Heavenly Masters, who form a heavenly theocracy to combat evil ghosts and demons. Exorcisms practiced by the Heavenly Masters Sect involved identifying, summoning, and judging ghosts much as a court system adjudicates criminals. It was common for a patient initially to confess his sins in hopes of curtailing spiritual ramifications resulting from one's misdeeds. The "Scripture of Orthodox Unity" (141 CE) reveals that if a confession failed to resolve the illness, the Daoist priest would have to send offerings to specified spirit generals and petition them to destroy the evil ghost that penetrated into the patient's body. Such rites also involved the use of charms and calligraphy written with specific inscription for select spirits. Exorcism ceremonies involved chanting to call the spirits, incantations to announce what needs to be exorcised, as well as ritual movements called "The Stepping of Yu" to emulate the movements of the constellations.

Another Daoist tradition related to exorcism is "internal cultivation," which is the creation of spiritual bodies. Spirit entities created in this fashion can aid the priest in exorcisms. The method of building another spiritual body through internal cultivation harkens back to the Han dynasty, when Heavenly Master Zhang Dao Ling internally gave birth to seventy-two spirit bodies, which he used to conduct healing and exorcism rituals. When Zhang Dao Ling performed exorcisms, he would call upon multiple spirits, such as Zhongkui, a spirit who captured ghosts. Whenever Zhang Dao Ling exorcised evil spirits and demons, his rituals included verbal incantations invoking the name of spirits created through internal cultivation.

Another method of Daoist exorcism is still practiced in contemporary times. In areas such as Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, it is common to call a spirit into one's body to expel lesser spirits and demons. Instead of being the conductor of divine spirits within and outside one's body, the Master transforms himself into the spirit in whose name the exorcism is to be conducted. Unlike the internal cultivation of spirits, this technique is believed to tax the priest's own mental, physical, and spiritual faculties, thus contributing to a premature death.

Modern Daoist exorcism typically begins by determining the nature of the

possessing spirit using a system of astrological calculations believed to have been invented by the Yellow Emperor. The Daoist priest acting as the ritual master will discern whether the spirit is a ghost, an ancestor spirit, or a demon.

Performing exorcisms and the understanding of the treatment of spirit possession and illness are culturally inherent in Daoist practices today. Daoist exorcism rites necessitate the transmission of knowledge from masters trained in such techniques. A Daoist exorcist must acquire the essential instructions, registers, and heavenly authorization. Adepts would often have to practice these esoteric techniques in dark and secluded areas, such as tombs, in order to communicate with spirit beings and to build the confidence necessary to perform exorcisms. In modern times, transmission and practice of such rituals still occur in Daoist temples throughout the world, especially in China and Taiwan.

Gary Lee Greer

See also: China

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DARREL, JOHN

John Darrel (1562–1607) was an Anglican exorcist who achieved notoriety before being convicted as a fraud. Darrel was the son of the aspiring miller Henry Darrel and most likely born in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. Darrel earned a BA from Queens' College, Cambridge, in 1579. After a failed attempt to study law at the Inns of Court in London, Darrel returned to Mansfield, then moved to Bulwell near Nottingham, and eventually settled in Ashby de la Zouch. Having rejected the law Darrel devoted himself to the care of men's souls. He was ordained as a minister circa 1589. While Darrel was not strictly speaking a Puritan, his narratives of demonic encounters were

influenced by and constructed to fit Puritan mentality and theology.

Darrel's career as an exorcist commenced in 1586. Evidently, Darrel had gained some standing as an exorcist/spiritual councillor by this date. Edward Beresford, a neighbor of the demoniac Katharine Wright, recommended Darrel's services. Darrel cited a witch as the root of the problem and this became a pattern in his later interventions. He unsuccessfully attempted to prosecute a local woman, Margaret Roper, for bewitching Wright. The local magistrate, Godfrey Foljambe, unconvinced by Darrel's claims, threatened to imprison him if he persisted in his accusations. Despite the unsuccessful prosecution, after two weeks of his involvement, Darrel claimed to have successfully ejected eight demons from the girl. Others, however, including members of Wright's own family were not so convinced that his intercession had been beneficial; both her brother and step-father saw no improvement in her condition following Darrel's intercession.

Darrel continued to minister to alleged demoniacs. His involvement in the exorcism of Thomas Darling, the "Boy of Burton," in 1596 expanded his reputation further. Similarly to the Wright case, a local woman, Alice Gooderidge, was identified as responsible for the boy's sufferings. On this occasion, though, there is no evidence that Darrel was responsible for her arrest, subsequent imprisonment in Derby jail, and eventual death while confined. Indeed Darrel was purportedly reluctant to become involved in the case at all for fear others would think he was seeking glory. He claimed this was why he was not physically present at Darling's dispossession on May 28, 1596. Nevertheless, Darling's friends and family followed Darrel's advice to pray and fast and felt that this helped to eject the demon. Darrell continued to emphasize prayer and fasting as the best means of exorcism in his subsequent cases.

Next, Darrel ministered to seven demoniacs in the household of the gentleman Nicholas Starkey at Cleworth, Lancashire. Darrel, and his associate the pastor George More, cured all but one of the seven in a series of dramatic confrontations on March 17–18, 1597. The explanation for the sole failure was that the 30-year-old maid in question, Jane Ashton, became a "papist." Overall, the Cleworth exorcisms were a success. Where physicians and folk healers had failed, Darrell triumphed using prayer and fasting. Darrel and More, as well as several witnesses and supporters, published accounts of this, and the earlier exorcisms, further spreading Darrel's reputation. Consequently, Darrel was invited to Nottingham by the town

council to treat the 20-year-old, apprentice musician William Sommers in November 1597.

Nottingham became Darrel's downfall. Initially all seemed to be progressing according to plan. On November 7, 1597, Darrel ejected the demon before an audience. Sommers, however, relapsed and was repeatedly exorcised and repossessed over the course of several weeks. By the end of the month Sommers's sister, Mary Cooper, became possessed as well. The two claimed they were bewitched and made accusations of witchcraft. Based upon their testimony Darrel had 13 individuals arrested, all but two of whom were released. Darrel had overstepped himself on this occasion; of the two remaining in prison one, Alice Freeman, was related to William Freeman, an alderman of the city. Sommers was arrested on a counter charge of witchcraft and, under questioning, alleged that Darrel had taught him to feign his symptoms (an accusation he would retract and renew). Matthew Hutton, archbishop of York, convened a commission in March 1598 to investigate the case. The commission, composed of local lay and clerical worthies, was prejudiced in Darrel's favor. It declared him innocent and Sommers a genuine demoniac. But in April, Darrel's adversaries pushed Hutton into stripping the minister of his preaching license. Darrel's detractors also drew him to the attention of John Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury, who summoned the exorcist to London.

Darrel, along with his associate George More, was tried for fraudulent exorcism before the Commission for Ecclesiastical Causes in May 1599. Chief amongst the witnesses against him were Katherine Wright, William Sommers, and Thomas Darling. Examined by the Commission, Wright testified that she had never believed herself possessed and that Darrel taught her how to feign the symptoms. Thomas Darling and William Sommers similarly testified that they had been tutored by Darrel. More and Darrel were deposed from the ministry, and imprisoned to await their sentences, although the two appear to have been released within a year or two. A vitriolic pamphlet war occurred from 1599 to 1602, between Darrel and his supporters and the Anglican Church, whose cause was championed by Samuel Harsnett. These pamphlets, in which each side attempts to assert their spiritual supremacy, demonstrate the political nature of possession in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Darrel was surreptitiously released from prison in the summer of 1599.

Darrel's activities had significant long-term repercussions. Anglican

Church authorities realized exorcists were a liability that could be exploited by rival churches. In 1604 the Anglican Church enacted a new canon: No minister was to attempt to exorcise supposed demoniacs through the means of prayer and fasting: "under pain of imputation of imposture or cozenage and deposition from the ministry." As for Darrel himself, beyond being presented at Teversal in 1607 for not receiving communion, and later in same year for preaching without a license in the region, he disappears from the records.

Deborah Lea

See also: Dugdale, Richard

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DEATHS RESULTING FROM EXORCISM

In many traditions, exorcisms of demonic or evil spirits involves practices that are abusive to the possessed, such as binding, beating, or starvation. Although these practices are not intended to be fatal, it is not uncommon for the possessed to die during exorcisms. Prominent 20th-century examples include the Klingenberg (Germany) and the Tanacu (Romania) cases, both of which were adapted into films. These deaths demonstrate why the study of exorcism is relevant to many fields of study, including law.

In early modern Europe, priests performing exorcism could refer to the scholastic theologian John Duns Scotus (1266–1308) who wrote that the exorcist should show his contempt for the demon by beating, kicking, spitting, and burning Asafoetida (a foul-smelling herb). Lutheran exorcists referred to Martin Luther himself since he reportedly exorcised a young girl with the help of a strong kick.

In early modern Europe, techniques of exorcism were closely related to witch-hunting. Even though the *Rituale Romanum* (1614) advised exorcists to rely primarily on "prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21), many treatises on

exorcism from this period prescribe torturing the possessed. Italian exorcist Girolamo Menghi (1529–1609) published three potent textbooks about exorcism: *Flagellum Daemonum* (The Scourge of Demons, 1576), *Fustis Daemonum* (The Bludgeon of Demons, 1584), and *Fuga Daemonum* (The Flight of Demons, 1596). These treatises were derivative of a witch-hunting text, the "*Malleus Maleficarum*" or "Hammer of the Witches," written in the 1480s. Menghi recommended violent procedures, such as forcing the possessed to inhale smoke from burning sulphur. German Jesuit theologian and exorcist Peter Thyraeus (1546–1601) regarded beating as useful in some exorcisms. He claimed that the screams one hears during these beatings did not come from the possessed person but from the demon. Exorcist Piero Antonio Stampa recommended bearing the possessed above a fire of burning pitch and sulphur. Third-party accounts suggest that at least some of the techniques described in these treatises were actually used. Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) witnessed an exorcism in Rome in 1581 and reported that the allegedly possessed man was beaten and spat upon.

Two Roman Catholic priests, Rev. Ernst Alt, left, and Rev. Wilhelm Renz, second from left, and Anna and Josef Michel, right, stand to receive verdict of court, Friday, April 21, 1978, Aschaffenburg, Germany. All four were found guilty of negligent homicide in the death of the Michels' 23-year-old daughter, Anneliese, who died of dehydration and malnutrition during grueling rites of exorcism. (AP Photo/Kurt Strumpf)

Not surprisingly, this violent model of exorcism led to a number of fatalities. In 1653, maidservant Maria Pihler from Lechhausen, near Augsburg, Germany, believed that she had met the devil in a forest. During the following days she suffered convulsive seizures and screaming fits. Pihler was sent to a convent in Augsburg where she was treated with "spiritual healings" to be released from the devil's temptation. When all attempts failed, she was sent back to her home village. In February 1654 the attacks recurred, and she was again admitted to the convent. Two Carmelite Fathers performed exorcisms by beating and kicking Pihler, ripping out her hair, and pouring hog excrement mixed with water down her throat. After a few days, Pihler died from exhaustion. The two Carmelite Fathers did not believe that their exorcisms caused the woman's death but accused two wardresses who watched Pihler, claiming that they bewitched and thereby killed her. The wardresses were burned on the stake a few months later.

Exorcisms of children were also not unusual in early modern Europe and sometimes resulted in death. In the 1720s the mother of little Theresia Fleiner from Augsburg, Germany, invoked the town council to help her child since she suspected her to be possessed by the devil. The council advised her to reduce Theresia's food. The girl died from malnutrition. Further cases are recorded in which parents who suspected their children to be possessed beat their children or starved them to death.

In the 20th century, no other incident attracted more public attention than the Klingenberg case. In 1976, Anneliese Michel, a young woman from a staunchly Catholic home in Bavaria (Germany), died from malnutrition, extreme physical exertion, and pneumonia. Physicians attributed her death to a series of exorcisms. The German public assumed exorcisms were a thing of the past and were alarmed to learn that Michel's exorcisms had been authorized by the Bishop of Würzburg. Public outrage over Michel's death inspired reform by the German hierarchy. In 1979, the German Bishops' Conference used the public debate as an opportunity to convene a committee of theologians, physicians, and psychologists who developed a "Liturgy for the liberation of evil." This liturgy was meant to offer a form of spiritual healing as an alternative to a dramatic battle with demonic forces. The German Bishops' Conference also unsuccessfully tried to influence the revision of the *Rituale Romanum* with this redefinition of the traditional rite.

On May 15, 1966, 17-year-old German Bernadette Hasler died in Ringwil near Zurich, Switzerland, following a series of exorcisms performed by Josef

Stocker and Magdalena Kohler. Stocker became a Pallottine Catholic priest in 1934. In 1941 he became vice rector of the Salzburg seminary in Austria but was forced into hiding by the Gestapo for speaking against the Nazi regime. He fled to a Salzburg monastery where he allegedly exorcised a nun. Stocker was later excommunicated and started an independent church with Kohler. Wanted for fraud in Germany, the pair fled to Switzerland in the 1950s and established a juvenile shelter. After Hasler arrived at their shelter, they tortured her for months, forcing her to confess fictitious sins for which she was then punished. Kohler and Stocker tried to exorcise Bernadette by beating her. These beatings eventually killed her, and Stocker and Kohler were sentenced to prison despite their claim that Hasler's death had been part of an exorcism. After serving her sentence, Kohler was expelled from Switzerland. She inherited a house in Germany on the condition that she live with a widow named Anna Wermuthäuser. Kohler tortured Wermuthäuser for years, attempting to "beat the devil in Anna and expel him." Wermuthäuser died from these beatings, and in 1988 Kohler was again sentenced to prison and committed to a mental institution.

In 2005 15-year-old Roger Bossé, suffering from epilepsy and mental problems, was bound to a cross and tortured for three days by four members of the Église du Christianisme Céleste in French Guyana, which had been founded in Benin. Roger Bossé suffocated as a result of a gag that was placed in his mouth, and the four were sentenced for negligent homicide. Some of them have already had a criminal record for performing abusive exorcisms. Also in 2005, Irina Cornici was killed during an exorcism in Tanacu, Romania. In January 2011, a 26-year-old Russian Orthodox woman from Voronezh, Russia, died from an exorcism. The exorcism was performed by her parents after her husband accused her of being Satan.

In the United States, there have been numerous cases of injury and death resulting from improvised exorcisms. These cases frequently involve people killing their own children by beating, starving, or drowning them to remove demons. Some cases are noteworthy because of the particularly strange manner of the exorcism. In 1980, Patricia Abraham killed her baby in an oven in attempt to "burn the devil" out. In 1997, a mother, Angelic Burney, and grandmother, Rosa Wilkerson, in Brooklyn accidentally killed a child by forcing it to drink a mixture of ammonia, vinegar, cayenne pepper, and olive oil intended to drive out a demon. A similar incident occurred in 2009 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, when Latisha Lawson forced her son to drink a mixture of

vinegar and blessed olive oil to remove a demon called “Marzon.” She prevented her son from vomiting the mixture, causing him to choke. In 2011, Dora Alicia Tejada Pleitez of Nantucket, Massachusetts, killed her three-year-old daughter by stuffing roses down her throat to drive out demons.

There have also been cases of fatal exorcisms in Muslim communities. In August 2004, a 23-year-old woman from Düsseldorf, Germany, was strangled, drowned, and beaten to death by her husband and others. Her husband was sentenced to prison for nine years. His late German-Moroccan wife had suffered from depression and was examined by both a psychiatrist and an Islamic cleric in Morocco. The woman ascribed her depression to *jinns*. She died in a bathtub during an exorcism performed by her husband and a Muslim. Similar incidences have been reported among modern Muslim communities living in Brussels, Belgium, and London.

Deadly exorcisms have also occurred in Asia. In August 2013, a three-year-old girl from Bukit Mertajam, Malaysia, was restrained under a blanket by her parents and five other family members for 20 hours in order to stop the influence of demons. The girl finally asphyxiated. The parents and an uncle were sent to prison. An aunt, who was believed to be the instigator, was committed to a mental institution. The case inspired a public statement from Malaysia’s Daoist, Muslim, Christian, and Hindu leaders that exorcism must be left to professionals.

Japan’s culture of spirit possession and new religious movements has also resulted in deadly exorcisms. In 2012, 65-year-old Sachito Eto was hanged for beating 6 people to death with sticks during a series of exorcisms held between 1994 and 1995. The Japanese government labeled Eto a “cult leader,” and she claimed she would be resurrected following her execution. In 2011, Atsushi Maishigi accidentally asphyxiated his daughter with the help of Kazuaki Kinoshita, a monk from a Buddhist sect called Nakayama-shingo-shoshu. Maishigi’s daughter had suffered from mental and physical health problems. When traditional medicine failed, he turned to exorcism. The two tied the girl to a chair placed face up under a waterfall in the sect’s church, causing her to drown.

Shamanic traditions of exorcism have also resulted in death. In 2007, Janet Moses of New Zealand drowned while undergoing a Maori ritual to lift a “makutu” or evil spirit. In 2010, a four-year-old boy from the Russian region of Primorye died after a female Korean shaman tried to expel evil spirits from him.

Deaths resulting from exorcism present a number of historical, theological, legal, and ethical problems. Further historical inquiry is needed to examine how fatal exorcisms influence the theology and practice of religious communities. The death of Anneliese Michel demonstrates how such events can inspire liturgical and theological reforms. Theologically, these events challenge the idea that exorcism is a form of healing. Can an exorcism that kills the possessed be considered successful? And if so, what does this say about the value of human life? Legally, fatal exorcisms present a problem for democratic societies that value religious liberty. Should believers be allowed to undergo rituals that can prove fatal? A further problem concerns the definition of religion. Many modern courts have dismissed exorcism as a legitimate religious practice and simply committed exorcists to mental institutions. Finally, the role of the media should be examined in sensationalizing these cases. Reports of fatal exorcisms generally produce public outrage and serve to stigmatize religious groups who believe in spirit possession. Is it desirable, let alone possible, for the media to report on such events without dismissing the religious communities involved as backwards or dangerous?

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See also: Japanese New Religious Movements; Jinn; Korean Shamanism; Michel, Anneliese; *Rituale Romanum*; Tanacu Exorcism; Taylor, Michael

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DELIVERANCE MINISTRY

Popular among Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, deliverance ministries are specialized religious practices, closely related to exorcism, that are concerned with freeing people from demonic oppression. Those engaged in deliverance ministry believe that Christians, as well as non-Christians, can be victimized by demons; therefore, intervention is necessary to free the victims from demonic attacks. Its advocates suggest that oppression is distinct from possession because the individual retains a high level of autonomy. Furthermore, they maintain that oppression is common whereas demonic possession is extremely rare.

Deliverance ministry began in the middle part of the 20th century. Originally, it developed out of Pentecostal-Charismatic context, but it currently crosses denominational boundaries. The emergence of deliverance ministries can be credited to Charismatic Derek Prince (1915–2003) whose own experience with depression led him to believe that he was oppressed by an evil spirit of heaviness. From this Prince developed a theology that anyone, including Christians, can experience oppression and different demons are responsible for various types of affliction. Prince added that persons become demonized by opening certain doorways for demons to enter. These doorways include interaction with the occult, addictions, and sexual sins. Subsequently, Prince's teachings primarily focused upon deliverance ministry, influencing him to write nearly 50 books on the topic. Prince's theology spread widely among many Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, but its controversial nature has not gained universal acceptance, even within these groups.

Generally proponents of deliverance ministry teach that Christians cannot be possessed by demons, because they are children of God—Satan and his demons cannot lay claim to them. However they do believe that Christian can be influenced, oppressed, or experience subjection to evil spirits. Some even suggest that Christians may be inhabited by demons in their body, but demons cannot possess their soul. Evil spirits can never completely override a Christian's personal autonomy; therefore, it is appropriate to refer to these individuals as being "severely demonized." For this reason deliverance ministries have roots in exorcism practices, but their beliefs extend beyond traditional views of possession and exorcism. Traditionally, Christian teachings suggest that demons cannot possess believers, so deliverance theology provides an explanation for afflictions and habitual sins present

within the lives of Christians.

Deliverance ministers argue that oppression is quite common and many individuals who are oppressed are not even aware of their condition. According to Francis MacNutt, a deliverance minister and former Roman Catholic priest, possession is fairly rare in relation to the common need for deliverance. He even estimates that one-third, or even a majority of people, may need deliverance. Possession is extremely rare because it normally overwhelms individuals who request it. Consequently, he argues that Christians should be more concerned about deliverance than possession.

According to deliverance advocates, demonic oppression may be initiated through a variety of means. Christians can be demonized if they are guilty of severe and unconfessed sins or encounter others who have committed gross sins. The most common sinful acts, resulting in oppression, include sexual transgressions, rape, abuse, and witchcraft. Demons may also enter individuals through generational curses or sins committed by one's ancestors. The late pastor John Wimber (1934–1997) coined the term "inherent demons" for malevolent spirits that are transferred from parent to child. Even an unborn child in her mother's womb is open to oppression if a parent speaks words of rejection. Once demonized, individuals may experience physical, mental, and spiritual attacks. This could include anything from contracting bodily ailments, depression, and doubting one's faith. Some even postulate that demons are responsible for post-traumatic stress disorder. According to MacNutt, the spirit of trauma is the most common demon of affliction, estimating that as many as two-thirds of those demonized are afflicted by these demons. Trauma is unique because it is caused by other people's sins and inflicts its victims with malevolent spirits of grief, fear, and rejection.

A significant part of deliverance ministry includes discernment—the ability to identify demonic oppression. Repeated sin is a good indication of a demon stronghold. Other symptoms include voices in one's head, visions or nightmares, unusual changes in facial expressions, body contortions, and abnormal fluctuations in the voice. Even small ailments, like aches and pains in the body, may be signs of demonization. Deliverance ministers believe that discernment can be a challenging activity because demons attempt to disguise their activities. Consequently, they believe that God bestows upon some the gift of discernment through the Holy Spirit. This gives Christians a supernatural ability to identify the presence of demonic forces. Once demonic

oppression is identified, the practice of deliverance is needed to bring freedom to the individual from these demonic influences.

The actual undertaking of deliverance can take a variety of forms. One may deliver his or her self from oppression, individuals can be delivered through the ministry of others, and even groups of demonized people can be delivered simultaneously. Deliverance may occur in one session, but at other times it may require a series of sessions. On occasion one may perform a deliverance spontaneously, but on other occasions one may be able to prepare before a deliverance. When preparations are possible one is encouraged to pray, fast, and form a team of trusted individuals to help in the deliverance. Deliverance ministers advocate forming a team to prevent scandals, to assist in restraining the oppressed (when needed), and to provide rest for those leading the deliverance. Advocates of these ministries caution that, if possible, deliverance should be performed under the careful watch of an experienced practitioner. Ultimately, it is not the skill of the deliverance minister that is effective, but the power of Jesus alone that secures deliverance.

The central practice of any deliverance ministry is prayer, but it is not a typical prayer of petition. Rather, it is a command for the evil spirits to depart its victim. Spiritual warfare is often employed as a key metaphor to discuss deliverance, as Satan and his demons afflict humans to disrupt God’s plans and activities. Deliverance ministers typically invoke the name of Jesus, compelling demons to cease its oppression. Many deliverance ministers believe that demons are typically expelled through the mouth, often causing fits of coughing or even vomiting within the oppressed individual. Frequently, individuals are demonized by groups of demons, and in these cases multiple stages of deliverance are necessary. Some advocates teach that certain places, where traumatic events occurred, are oppressed by demons and also require deliverance.

According to proponents, deliverance may need to occur multiple times during a person’s life, depending upon their circumstances. Individuals may need deliverance at different times for different afflictions. Many Christians, if not all, receive a level of deliverance upon conversion, and further deliverance may need to occur due to their preconversion lifestyle. For others, demonic attacks subsequent to their conversion may call for deliverance ministry. Christians must consciously block demons from their life, thus avoiding the need for deliverance. Ultimately, it is believed that

deliverance is a type of healing and a part of sanctification—the process of making one pure and holy. This captivity can occur to both Christians and non-Christians, but non-Christians are more susceptible because they are not equipped with the tools to combat demonic attacks.

Christian critics of deliverance ministries accuse deliverance ministers of sensationalizing the presence and activity of demons. Furthermore, they argue that deliverance ministry lacks biblical precedence. On the other hand, practitioners of deliverance ministries argue that there is biblical precedence for their beliefs and activities. Although the term "deliverance ministry" is not in the Bible, its advocates claim that one can determine its legitimacy through careful interpretation of the Bible. It is most evident in the ministry of Jesus wherein he presents the model for deliverance practices. Jesus himself teaches and demonstrates the manner Christians should apply deliverance. After all, Jesus's primary ministry involved the exorcism of demons. Although advocates of deliverance ministry argue that their practices are grounded in scriptural precedence, they also allow for experience to greatly influence their understanding.

Finally, Christians should follow Jesus's example and make deliverance a focal point of Christian mission. Because deliverance was at the center of Jesus's ministry, deliverance should also be the center of contemporary Christian practice. Many supporters believe that all Christians are called to some form of deliverance ministry, making it imperative to inform believers of this practice.

David Bradnick

See also: Charismatic Movement; Pentecostalism; *Pigs in the Parlor*

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DELPHIC ORACLE

The Oracle of Delphi was situated on the mountain of Parnassus in central Greece. Like other oracles throughout the ancient world, pilgrims would travel to Delphi to receive prophecies. The site of the oracle was sacred to the god Apollo and housed a temple, a theater, and a stadium. A priestess, known as the Pythia, would enter a trance during which she was believed to be possessed by Apollo. Messages delivered by the oracle were regarded as the words of the god himself. According to legend, the Oracle predicted the Trojan War. The Oracle of Delphi was also believed to be the center of the world and a place where heaven and earth met. As such, it was a place where humans could bring their problems before the gods. The oracle was a unifying force that helped to foster a sense of shared identity among the cities of ancient Greece. The inscriptions on the Oracle's doors, "Nothing in Excess" and "Know Yourself" became famous throughout the ancient world. Greek leaders, including Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE), consulted the Oracle before important undertakings such as war or establishing new colonies. However, common people could also seek divine guidance regarding more mundane problems. The steady stream of pilgrims made Delphi a wealthy town. The Oracle's influence peaked between the fifth and seventh centuries BC, after which it entered a long decline.

In Greek mythology, the Delphi oracle was founded accidentally through a divine struggle between Zeus and Hera. When Zeus wanted to measure the center of the world, he sent two eagles from each end of the world, which met at Delphi, the center. Gaia, the goddess of the earth, delivered an enormous serpent, called Python, which became the guardian of Delphi. When the goddess Leto was pregnant and going to bear Zeus's children, his jealous wife, Hera, sent Python to kill Leto and her unborn children. Apollo prevented Hera's plan by killing the serpent. Python's blood was spilled on the earth of Delphi, which transferred the visionary abilities of the serpent to the place. The serpent's breath was transformed into hallucinogenic gases that rose from the ground and gave the oracle its powers. Because Python had been Gaia's child, Apollo exiled himself from Olympus and served as a shepherd. After this purification, he returned to Delphi where he founded the oracle and appointed the first Pythia. From that time onwards, Delphi was under the protection of Apollo rather than Gaia.

The Sibyl, or prophetess, at the oracle of Delphi, circa 600 BCE. In addition to the Oracle, Delphi was home to a Sibyl, who is often confused with the Pythia or priestess of Apollo. Engraving based on the Sistine Chapel fresco by Michelangelo. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

The Oracle could be consulted nine times per year—always seven days after the new moon, excluding the rainy winter months. Asking questions required a sacrifice to ensure the help of Apollo. Usually a goat was offered and the Pythia would then burn barley meal and laurel leaves on a special altar in the temple. According to ancient sources such as Plutarch or Cicero, the Pythia would give prophecies from the temple's inner sanctum known as the "adyton." She would sit on a tripod that spanned a cleft in the rock, from which an intoxicating vapor would rise. The vapor induced a trance during which the Pythia would give prophecies. Modern archaeological research suggests that the vapor was ethylene gas. Ethylene gas, possibly mixed with ethane, may have been naturally rising from the ground at Delphi.

Delphic prophecies were usually cryptic and difficult to interpret. Many historians believe that the Pythia could not have been heard over the hissing of vapor and that an attendant serving the temple was needed to relay her

message to pilgrims. Because the prophecies were ambiguous, many different outcomes could be interpreted as the fulfillment of a prophecy. This made the Oracle of Delphi respected beyond reproach, and the stream of pilgrims continued for centuries. The oracle was even consulted by early Romans. Following an earthquake in 83 BCE, the oracle entered a long decline. Pilgrims ceased to come and the temple's statues were looted. It was finally closed by emperor Theodosius I in 395 CE.

Frank Jacob

See also: Sibyl

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DES VALLÉES, MARIE

Born in Saint-Sauveur-Lendelin in Lower Normandy in 1590, Marie des Vallées claimed to experience possession for nearly two-thirds of her life during which time she rose to prominence as a mystical icon and spiritual advisor. Des Vallées's father died when she was twelve. Her mother remarried an abusive butcher who eventually caused Marie to flee her home. After two years of wandering, des Vallées claimed to develop symptoms of possession caused by a local suitor who sought the help of a witch known as "La Grivelle" to acquire Marie's hand in marriage after she refused his proposal. In May of 1609, the suitor reportedly cast a spell over Marie when he pushed against her during the feast of Saint Marcouf. Immediately after the incident, Marie recounted strong desires for the man and returned home before falling on the floor with "terrible cries." Although unnamed, des Vallées reported that the suitor eventually left the region and the witch was executed for unrelated crimes. She continued, however, to suffer the

symptoms of possession for the rest of her life. Marie reported suffering from strong sexual desires as well as other physical symptoms such as an aversion to the Church and the Eucharist. She sought the help of Bishop Briroy in 1612, before whom she reportedly experienced xenoglossy during an exorcism. After years of failed exorcisms, des Vallées traveled to Archbishop Mgr de Joyeuse in 1614 who, after several failed exorcisms, had des Vallées arrested, concluding that she must have been complicit in the witchcraft. After her release, she became a mystical icon and gathered a spiritual following. Marie was an influential friend of Jean Eudes who founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Her possession persisted until 1655, one year before her death.

Des Vallées's writings reflect an acceptance of her possession as a service to God. She occasionally challenged the demons, taunting them to do their worst. She developed an understanding of divine engagement in the exorcisms as she understood the demonic intrusion to be permitted by God. During a failed exorcism, one demon reportedly stated that they would not allow Marie to take communion in obedience to God's command. Des Vallées developed a sense of spiritual devotional practice closely intertwined with her possession. She opposed worldliness and sensuality as found in both others and herself and often performed punitive tasks, such as circling a church on her knees and carrying an image of the Virgin Mary.

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See also: Catholicism; Gender

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DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), previously called Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD)—or more colloquially, "split personality"—is characterized by the existence of at least two distinct personalities within the same person. The identities each maintain a relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and self. It is estimated that

between one and three percent of the general population meets the criteria for this disorder; it is diagnosed significantly more often in women than men.

Research shows that these complete systems of identity (personality or alters) may differ in cognitive, emotional, and even physiological traits, such as blood pressure and heart-rate. However, one test rating that appears consistent between alters is the IQ test. Those diagnosed with the disorder report blackouts and periods of time they cannot account for. They find that they own belongings they have not bought, and know people they have not met. Alters recurrently take control of the person's behavior and usually represent a need or behavior that is inhibited in the host. They speak in different voices and develop a range of personalities over time that may be old or young, male or female, often with a variety of sexualities, beliefs, and lifestyles. Others who witness these shifts in personality report a dramatic and sometimes frightening change in those with whom they are speaking.

In dissociative states, one feels detached, distant, or even completely unaware of the environment. Dissociation can be a way of managing a stressful event through "compartmentalizing" or keeping knowledge out of one's consciousness for psychological protection. The classic example is childhood sexual abuse. Acting as a protective defense against the horror and fear, the child "goes away" in his or her mind, and in returning, has no memory of the abuse. In this way, some degree of dissociation may be a healthy coping mechanism for managing traumatic events.

The treatment of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is similar to that of other trauma-based disorders. Among the most effective modalities for treating DID are Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and various forms of insight-oriented therapy.

The philosopher of science, Ian Hacking asserts that the clinical phenomenon of a multiple personality first arose in France around 1875; before that, he argues, there was no concept like this for a traumatized person to adopt. Before then, the presentation of split personalities or "multiples" was attributed to psychosis or, as has been observed since the Renaissance, an instance of demonic possession.

In the United States, rates of Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) soared in the 1980s in tandem with false memory syndrome and other categories of trauma and dissociation. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III) in 1980 identified MPD as a discrete disorder within a

larger category of Dissociative Disorders. And yet, Hacking and others argue that the increased prevalence is a result not of increased trauma among (mostly, young women), but of overdiagnosis among clinicians, which leads highly suggestible patients to identify with the disorder. Those diagnosed with MPD in the 1980s were understood to have more than one person inside; in other words, each personality maintains its own intentional action. Some come to develop dozens (or more) personalities, often wreaking havoc on the host who attempts to lead a normal life.

When the incidence of Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) was at its cultural height, numerous films, books, and television shows featured dramatic examples of what it means to have "multiple personalities." Those depicted in such dramas tended to be young women. In the late 1950s, *The Three Faces of Eve* portrayed a woman with split personalities who, after coming to terms with her childhood trauma, was at once, whole again. A television series, *Sybil*, that aired in 1976, depicts a similar tale—although one darker and more sinister than previous cinematic representations; here, each personality is highly autonomous in relation to "the host."

When DSM-IV was published in 1994, Multiple Personality Disorder was renamed as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). This change was not in name alone but marked a shift towards understanding the distinct personalities to be involuntary and unconscious (not volitional as was previously asserted in DSM-III). In other words, the personality is the sum of the various dissociated identities. DID, as with Multiple Personality Disorder, remains rather controversial among clinicians. The disorder may be relevant only among cultures that assert that the "self" is an independent, bounded entity. It would make little sense in cultures that accept the notion that spirits or other entities can "take over" the bodies and minds of human beings. Unless there is a functional context (e.g., religious belief), alter identities tend to be associated with psychopathology.

Contemporary perspectives in psychiatry do not automatically assume that those who experience spirit possession are mentally ill. In fact, the American Psychiatric Association gathered a group of anthropologists and clinicians with expertise in culture to write a section of the revised *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV-TR) that aimed to help mental health providers distinguish between mental illness and culturally-constituted behavior, such as possession. Although not without some resistance, the committee has advanced its work over the last decade, and in

the latest edition of DSM-V, they include even more comprehensive guidance and support for clinicians to understand cultural idioms of distress and healing, which may include trance-possession behavior that resembles Dissociative Identity Disorder.

Scholars who are experts in cultural psychiatry, such as Roberto Lewis-Fernandez (1998), argue that the prevalence of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) needs to be carefully distinguished from culturally-supported phenomena around the world, such as trance and possession. For example, the *kris* dance in Bali, where community members in possession-trance states stab themselves with ritual daggers, is markedly different from those with dissociative disorders who engage in self-harm behaviors. Although the gods instruct the Balinese to stab themselves, this activity is supported by the culture and controlled so that no one gets hurt. These activities appear only in ritual settings; it would be highly inappropriate in Balinese society to assume the identity of a god outside of this context. However, as Erika Bourguignon argues, even within cultures such as Haiti, where possession is acceptable in certain contexts, if dissociation occurs as a result of a traumatic event, it may very well be seen as pathological.

Tanya Luhrmann, an anthropologist of religion and psychiatry, has posited a more nuanced response to these debates, arguing that there is a psychological capacity called *absorption*, which is involved in both dissociative disorders and in spiritual experiences like trance and possession. In America over the last 30 years, Luhrmann asserts that the rapid rise in dissociative disorders and in charismatic forms of Christianity that endorse speaking in tongues and allowing the "holy ghost" to take over one's body in religious ecstasy, are related. She argues that trance states play a role in the religious and psychological norms of nearly all cultures—but that these roles wax and wane over time. For Luhrmann, tendencies toward absorption (a learned capacity) is on a cultural upswing.

Sara Lewis

See also: Bali; Pentecostalism; Psychological Interpretations

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DUGDALE, RICHARD

Richard Dugdale (ca. 1660–?), along with his father, was a gardener in Surey, near Whalley, Lancashire. From 1689 to 1690 he achieved brief notoriety as “The Surey Demoniack” when he claimed to be demonically possessed. The alleged possession drew the attention of a group of “Dissenter” ministers who disapproved of the Church of England and saw Dugdale’s condition as an opportunity to proselytize. Thomas Jolie, the foremost minister involved, wrote an account claiming that Dugdale’s family were all of “papist” inclination and led dissolute lives. Such assertions illustrate how possessions became entangled in denominational struggles between churches.

According to Dugdale, his troubles started when he became inebriated and offered himself to the devil at the “Whalley Rushburying,” a traditional festival based around the changing of the rushes on the church floor. The devil promised to make him a good dancer so that he could impress a young lady. Dugdale subsequently experienced a series of visions that were suggestive of various sins, including greed and gluttony. After consultations with a doctor and a wise man proved fruitless, the latter advised him to consult the ministers.

On May 8, 1689, the first of many meetings intended to relieve Dugdale’s torments was held at Sparth. Like the Puritans, Jollie prescribed prayer and fasting to cure the possession. In the nine meetings held over the next two months Dugdale had ample opportunity to demonstrate the force of the demon’s hold over him. He responded to the ministers’ efforts with increasingly extreme behavior. Dugdale evidenced an array of bizarre symptoms: he went into fits and contortions, his eyeballs turned inwards, and his tongue swelled. In addition he lay as if dead, spat out balls of phlegm, experienced terrible rages, venomously harangued the ministers, displayed prophetic capabilities, spoke languages of which he had no knowledge, and regurgitated various items. Crowds swarmed to the meetings hoping to witness such behavior. On one occasion the crowd was so great that their

combined weight caused part of the barn to collapse.

As events progressed, John Carrington, a novice minister, came to the fore as the champion of the Dissenter ministers. Jollie's account presents the later stages of Dugdale's possession as a duel between demonic forces and a novice minister, in which the latter's strength of faith proved superior to diabolic wiles. By mid-November, Dugdale had not been successfully exorcised, and public interest began to wane. Furthermore, clearly not all had been convinced of the ministers' capabilities. Many people made donations so that Dugdale's family could seek legal or medical advice. At one point, Dugdale himself expressed dissatisfaction with the proceedings. After almost nine months and numerous theological discourses, Dugdale's possession ended on March 24, 1690. Jolie's account, written in 1697, describes the final demon expulsion in a single, short paragraph.

The events were immortalized in polemical tracts published by both the Dissenters and their supporters and the Anglican Church (championed by Zachary Taylor), who claimed Dugdale was feigning possession. The debate illustrates how possession and exorcism were used as vehicles for confessional debates at the close of the 17th century. Afterwards, Dugdale disappears from the records.

Deborah Lea

See also: Darrel, John; Lukins, George

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DYBBUK

In Jewish folklore and medieval Jewish mysticism *dybbuk*, plural *dybbukim*, is a form of possession in which a living body is taken over by the spirit of a dead person or a demon. In Hebrew, the word *dybbuk* is related to the idea of "adhesiveness" and is usually translated to English as "cleaving" or "clinging." Although reports of spirit possession in Jewish communities can be found in early rabbinic literature and figure prominently in the Gospels,

there was a surge of *dybbuk* accounts during the 16th century, mainly associated with the Galilean town of Safed, a stronghold of Kabbalistic mysticism. These accounts coincided with an increase in Christian claims of demonic possession that occurred throughout Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Although instances of *dybbukim* can be traced back to the 16th century, the term came into use substantially later and appears for the first time in a Yiddish pamphlet in Volhynia Ukraine in the late 17th century. Sources indicate that the Safed mystics circulated accounts of *dybbuk* possession that may have been responsible for the spread of the phenomenon among medieval Jewish communities, especially in Eastern Europe. Reactions to these new accounts suggest that *dybbuk* possession was perceived as a novel phenomenon that was different from earlier forms of possession. A central difference was that early possessions were believed to be caused by demons (*shedim*), while *dybbuk* possession was associated with the notion of *gilgul* (the idea that souls "transmigrate" to new bodies after death), which became central in mystical circles of the 16th century. Thus, medieval *dybbuk* cases generally identify the possessing spirt as that of a deceased person.

The reasons for *dybbuk* possession vary according to different traditions. Some believed that it was a result of the possessed person's sins, deviant behaviors, and religious negligence. According to this tradition a ghost seeking refuge from those who aim to harm it possesses a sinful individual, resulting in severe physical and mental agony for the host body. A different understanding of *dybbuk* possession regards the spirit as malevolent and evil. In the former perspective, those afflicted with possession suffer because they are sinners while in the latter they are passive and innocent victims. A slightly different account is that the possessed were sometimes guilty of a minor sin while the intrusive spirit was guilty of one or several severe transgressions such as murder, rape, or incest. The late Gershom Scholem claimed that most *dybbukim* were caused by spirits of deceased people whose sins were so great that they could not transmigrate. Such "homeless" spirits sought refuge in a living body, suggesting that the possessed person had committed a secret sin thereby opening the gates for potential *dybbuk*.

The *dybbuk* can entail a wide range of symptoms: aggressiveness towards oneself and others, convulsions, facial contortions, eye rolling, loss of consciousness, speaking in tongues, swearing, and the expression of contempt and disregard for religious and social conventions. In the majority

of cases the victims of *dybbukim* were females while those who possessed them were male entities. The “penetrations” of the female by the male, usually described in terms of rape, is one of many sexual undertones expressed through the phenomenon of *dybbuk*. The most common treatment for *dybbuk* possession is exorcism where an accomplished rabbi, known as a *Ba’al Shem* (“one with a name”), could potentially resort to a variety of techniques such as the creation of talismans bearing the holy names of God, potions, special liturgical formulas, threats of excommunication, inhaling of smoke, blowing of horns, and even beating. In spite of the prevalence of *dybbuk* possessions by disembodied spirits it was not always clear whether the possessing entity was a spirit or a demon. Since exorcising demons and spirits entailed different techniques, determining the identity of the possessor became an essential factor in deciding how to treat the *dybbuk*.

During *dybbuk* exorcisms, the transgressing spirit would typically identify itself by name, confess its sins, and recount the anguish it suffered after death. It would then explain what enabled it to penetrate the host body. Part of the exorcism process may entail appeasing the spirit by helping it reach spiritual repair (*tikkun*) thereby enabling it to transmigrate. There are several documentations of possessions in ancient Jewish literature, and numerous manuals have been dedicated to detailed instructions for *dybbuk* exorcism. In his *The Gate of Transmigrations* the famous 16th-century mystic Rabbi Chaim Vital describes exorcising a girl named Esther. With the help of 10 gifted scholars, he commanded the spirit to depart. This caused Esther’s left foot to bounce upward, which was interpreted as the spirit leaving through her small toe.

Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874–1925)—Book of Job, appearing in *Die Bucher Der Bibel.* (Ephraim Moses Lilien)

Dybbukim still occur in contemporary Jewish communities but are extremely rare. This may be a result of advances in modern medicine and the understanding that the *dybbuk* can be a sign of mental illness. Several prominent orthodox rabbis, including the influential Satmar Rebbe, have advocated psychiatry as the preferable remedy for an alleged *dybbuk* thereby substantially diminishing the need for traditional techniques of exorcism. Famous contemporary figures such as Rabbi A. Isaac Kook and HaRav David Batzri have exorcised *dybbukim* in recent decades. In 2009 advances in technology have introduced a new dimension to the history of *dybbuk* exorcism when Rabbi Batzri, accompanied by hundreds of his disciples in Israel, attempted to exorcise an evil spirit from a member of a Brazilian orthodox community via Skype.

Yair Lior

See also: Ba’al Shem Tov; Ibbur; Judaism

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ERGOTISM

Ergot (*claviceps purpurea*) is a fungus that grows on rye and other grains. It grows throughout Europe and was inadvertently brought to the New World by European colonists. The fungus contains toxic chemical compounds, and people who ate rye bread laced with ergot could develop a condition known as ergotism. Ergotism takes two forms. Ergot has hallucinogenic properties that cause "convulsive ergotism." Alkaloids found in ergot are chemically similar to LSD and can lead to irrational behavior, convulsions, and even death. Ergot can also constrict the blood vessels, causing "gangrenous ergotism" in which the tissue of the extremities is deprived of blood, dies, and falls off. Convulsive ergotism tends to affect populations with deficiencies of vitamin A. Those with sufficient vitamin A may show no symptoms until they advance to the stage of gangrenous ergotism. Ergotism tended to affect the poor, whose diet was more dependent on rye. After a particularly bad outbreak in 1093 in southern France, the monastic order called the Hospital Brothers of Saint Anthony was formed to help those suffering from the disease. Thus, the disease became known as "St. Anthony's fire." Ergotism was also known as *ignis sacer* (holy fire).

In this image a victim of St. Anthony's Fire (gangrenous ergotism) appeals to St. Anthony for help. Tissue damage begins in the extremities, symbolized by the victim's burning hand. He is using a crutch, suggesting that the disease has also affected his feet. Woodcut from Hans van Gersdorff Veldt Boeck van den Chirugia Scheel-Hans, Amsterdam, 1593. (Universal History Archive/Getty Images)

Beginning in the 1970s, a number of theories emerged proposing that hallucinations derived from ergotism were the basis for claims of possession and witchcraft. A particularly contested theory concerns the behavior of bewitched girls during the Salem Witch trials. Linda R. Caporael suggested that the young girls of Salem were suffering hallucinations and convulsions caused by ergotism that they mistakenly attributed to witchcraft and demonic possession. However, Nicholas P. Spanos and Jack Gottlieb rejected this theory. They noted that ergotism generally affects entire families while the initial victims of witchcraft in Salem were all young girls. They also note that the Salem colonists had ample access to vitamin A in the form of fish and dairy products, which should have prevented convulsive ergotism. The objections of Spanos and Gottlieb demonstrate the problems in attempting to reduce complex events involving supernatural belief to a single medical cause.

Joseph P. Laycock

See also: Dancing Mania; Psychological Interpretations

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ETHIOPIA

Among the 19 countries surveyed in the Pew Research Center’s study, *Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Ethiopia had the highest number of people who reported witnessing an exorcism. When asked if they had witnessed the Devil being driven out of a person, 74 percent of Ethiopian Christians and 44 percent of Ethiopian Muslims (66 percent of the total population) responded in the affirmative. Yet spirit possession in Ethiopia is even more widespread than this statistic reveals. While the belief in malevolent and satanic spirit possession is common throughout Ethiopia, there are also more ambivalent spirits. Ethiopia’s traditions of spirit possession include the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the *zar* and *ayana* cults, as well as hybrid practices of possession and exorcism.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church traces its history to the early fourth century. Famous for its vast wealth of Ge’ez language literature and liturgies, rock-hewn churches, and stylized artwork, the Ethiopian Church has also been a place where both peasants and kings sought aid against demonic forces. Indigenous hagiographies (*gädlat*) dating from the 14th and 15th centuries relate some of the earliest written accounts of priests and monks fighting the Devil (*diabolos*). The Devil was depicted as the enemy of the saints, constantly scheming against them. Part of the duty of holy men, therefore, was to protect people from these attacks. Exorcists used a variety of tools for this work, including the sacraments, water from holy springs, dirt from holy sites, relics of saints, vestments, hand crosses, and the recitation of prayers. In one account, the famous monk Täklä Haymanot (13th century) used a cross and a psalm to cast the Devil out of a mentally ill man, who then became a monk. Likewise, he used the sign of the cross to exorcise the Devil from a prostitute, who was restored to her role as wife and mother. In his

analysis of these accounts, historian Steven Kaplan argued that exorcism subdued those forces that sought to disrupt the orderly functioning of society, and it thereby reaffirmed social order and the power of the Church.

Satanic possession worked at all levels of society. At the close of the 13th century, there was a shift in monarchial power from the Zagwe dynasty to the Salomonic dynasty. This, naturally, created a great deal of jealousy and rivalry as people realigned themselves politically. In stories from this time, Satan provoked people to denounce the innocent and even murder their family members. To avoid these satanic attacks, rulers put themselves under the protection of holy men.

For many Ethiopians, not all possession is diabolical. The *zar* cult originated in Ethiopia in the 18th century. While the *zar* spirits are conceived of as jealous, wrathful, and vengeful, they also watch over their devotees. People provide offerings of coffee and sugar to their *zar*, hoping that in turn they will receive protection. Should a *zar*'s wrath be turned against a person, family, or community, a ram is sacrificed to propitiate the spirit's anger. Within the *zar* cult, women are generally possessed by male *zar*. The *zar* signals its intention to possess a person by making her ill. A shaman then attempts to diagnose the identity of the *zar* familiar. Through a dance, called *gurri*, the *zar* mounts its "human horse," and the spirit reveals itself when the possessed sings its praise song. Once the initiate has learned the dance, she can participate in the periodic gatherings of a shaman's coterie, which includes the dances and the songs of the various *zar*. The *zar* also possess their mediums at the beginning of a new year and at the end of Lent. The *zar* spirits make their demands known by speaking through the possessed. Anthropologist I. M. Lewis interpreted this as disenfranchised people seeking access to society's center. Women in Ethiopia often remain marginalized from the patriarchal power structures. When speaking as the spirit, they have a voice that can challenge that structure. Thus, *zar*-possessed women could make demands for gifts (such as jewelry, perfume, and clothing) and be critical of men in the community. Allan Young nuanced Lewis's theory, arguing that a woman had to both convince herself and her family of their special relationship with the *zar* before she could manipulate the possession status to her advantage.

While women may seek to challenge male authority by participation in the *zar* cult, the *ayana* cult is decidedly patriarchal. Among the Oromo, the *ayana* spirits are considered to be intangible beings with a social order that

mimics that of human society. The *ayana* were given to the Oromo by the high-God, Waka, as a sign of favor and to ensure the maintenance of traditional law. When the Oromo fail to maintain the correct social order, the *ayana* visit them with drought, sterility, health problems, and other misfortunes. The various *ayana* can possess anyone they choose, yet they most frequently come to dwell in the group landowner, the *Kallu*. The *Kallu*, in turn, acts as an intermediary between the people and the spirit world. Weekly, the *Kallu* enters a state of trance, demonstrating his possession by an *ayana*. After the people sing, dance, and make offerings in honor of the *ayana*, the *Kallu* pronounces his judgment over the peoples' transgressions, which range from disputes between persons to ritual impiety. Through this work, the *Kallu* seeks to maintain peaceful relations, the fecundity of the earth, and the fertility of the people.

For the priests and monks of the contemporary Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the battle line is clearly drawn between the army of God (including Christ, the Virgin Mary, the archangels, and the saints) and the army of evil (including the Devil, *sheitanna, zar*, and other spirits). Just as in the 13th century, priests and monks continue to use a variety of tools to cast out demons, violently spraying the possessed with water, making the sign of the cross over them, reciting prayers and psalms, and so on. The growing numbers of Protestant and Charismatic groups in Ethiopia have also taken up the battle. Lutherans, Baptists, Adventist, and Pentecostals developed rituals that involve congregational song and placing Bibles on the possessed.

Yet the line between Christian and non-Christian practices of exorcism is far more obscure. The *debtera* (learned cantors) of the Orthodox Tewahedo Church engage in various forms of occult wisdom—including healing with herbs, the production of magic scrolls, and the reading of horoscopes. In contrast to priests and monks who cast out spirits, *debtera* produce amulets and medicines that placate the spirits possessing people. When they are known to engage in these practices, priests bar *debtera* from receiving the Eucharist, yet they are still permitted to perform their function as cantors during the liturgy. Likewise, as Ronald M. Reminick points out in his article on the religious beliefs of the Amhara, many people will honor saints publicly in the Church, while honoring *zar* in private. Indeed, religious mixing or "syncretism" is widespread throughout Ethiopia. Among the Oromo, the *ayana* Mariyam is related to both the Virgin Mary and the indigenous goddess Atete. Likewise, the *ayana* Jebain, the servant of

Mariyam, is associated with the angel Gabriel.

Ethiopia's Muslims, who trace their history to the earliest days of Islam, have adopted the indigenous view that health and prosperity depends on right relations with the spirit world. In anthropologist Norbert Vecchiato's study of possession cults among the Sidimo, Zemzem, a convert from Christianity to Islam, claimed to be possessed by a Muslim spirit named Adal. In her ritual healings, Zemzem did not seek to exorcise but rather to propitiate Adal. During the ritual, she drank a great amount of coffee and chewed a stimulant called *qat*, leading her into a state of trance. From her trance, she divined the cause of maladies in her patients' lives. To heal her patients, she used a mix of tools including Islamic beads and incense, along with Christian objects, including pictures of the Virgin Mary, the Saints, and holy water.

Stephen Lloyd

See also: Islam; Zar

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EXORCIST, THE

The Exorcist, a novel written by William Peter Blatty (first published in May, 1971 and rereleased with new material in 2000) and a movie directed by William Friedkin (first released on December 26, 1973, and rereleased with new material in 2001), is considered by most as the quintessential fictional work on demonic possession. Pastiched and parodied in countless similar novels and films ever since, *The Exorcist* defined a subgenre of horror and

made iconic (and marketable) the personal and spiritual trials entailed in fighting evil entities.

According to Blatty, in various video and print interviews, the idea for *The Exorcist* stemmed from a story he read about in *The Washington Post* in 1949, while a junior at Georgetown University. It described a Lutheran boy (now believed to have been Ronald E. Hunkeler) in Mount Rainier, Maryland, who had undergone a Catholic exorcism. Blatty wanted to write a nonfiction account of the story, but because the family was embarrassed by the events that took place, he decided against it. He instead wrote a novel that contained sexually suggestive and rantflled outbursts similar to ones that occurred during the Mount Rainier case, this time using a 12-year-old girl named Regan MacNeil (played by Linda Blair) and her atheist mother, Chris (played by Ellen Burstyn), as the protagonist. As Mark Kermode suggests in his monograph about *The Exorcist*, many of the iconic signs of possession depicted in the novel, such as projectile vomiting, were not alleged to have occurred during the Mount Rainier case. Blatty researched exorcism and likely drew these tropes from earlier accounts of possession. Blatty sold the rights to his novel to Warner Brothers for $641,000 and was also hired to write the screenplay (for which he would earn an Academy Award).

The film was highly successful and received ten Academy Award nominations. Although William Friedkin was not the first choice by Warner Brothers to direct the film, he was given the script by Blatty, who had wanted him to direct from the beginning. Friedkin wanted to direct the movie because he was enthralled by how powerful the story was; however, he did not realize how many difficulties he would encounter while making the picture. During filming, Warner Brothers fought with him on several occasions about locations (the studio specifically did not want him filming in Iraq, where the opening scene is set) and casting. But Friedkin, a notoriously stubborn figure, did what he wanted. Several accidents occurred during filming, giving rise to a claim that the film was “cursed.” An unexplained fire destroyed one soundstage, and nine people connected to the project (cast, crew, and relatives of cast and crew) died during the filming. Father Tom Bermingham, the technical advisor for *The Exorcist* and a Catholic priest, was asked to perform an onset exorcism of sorts, which he did without hesitation. There were also rumors concerning the back problems of Burstyn and Blair, injured stuntmen, and numerous firings and resignations that took place during production.

The audience response to the film was dramatic. Horror author Stephen King described the phenomenon surrounding the film as "a two-month possession jag." *Time* magazine reported lines of 5,000 people waiting to purchase tickets. One theater manager estimated that each screening of the film caused an average of four blackouts, six episodes of vomiting, and numerous early exits. A report that appeared in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* in 1975 claimed that the film had induced in some viewers "cases of traumatic neurosis and even psychosis."

While popular with audiences around the world, the film was initially panned by many major film critics, including Jay Cocks of *Time* and Vincent Canby of *The New York Times*. Most agreed that, although intelligent, well-produced, and well-acted, *The Exorcist* contained too much gratuitous violence, disgusting imagery, and ultimately was extremely difficult to watch. Catholic critics were divided in their response with some regarding it as offensive and others praising it for acknowledging the reality of evil. Today the film and novel have been placed on a countless number of "Best Of" lists. More recent critics have praised *The Exorcist* as indicative of the era from which it emerged and as an allegory for the necessity of fighting against evil. In March 1990, Cardinal John O'Connor even read from the novel in St. Patrick's Cathedral and incorporated it into a homily.

Douglas MacLeod

See also: Blatty, William Peter; Hunkeler, Ronald E.

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FILM

Tropes of demonic possession and exorcism in cinematic texts have long been a staple of the motion picture industry (both foreign and domestic). The classic possession/exorcism plot features malevolent forces that enter the bodies of adults, children, animals, and sometimes objects (such as houses, dolls, or dangerous household items). Possessed characters then proceed to torment and murder families, unsuspecting teenagers, or other characters. Due to the nature of the subject matter, possession/exorcism films typically fall under the genre of the horror picture but have crossed into other genres as well. Although becoming more popular and marketable since William Friedkin's 1973 film adaptation of William Peter Blatty's novel *The Exorcist*, possession by spirits and demons has been depicted in film since the early days of the medium. Cinematic portrayals of possession developed naturally from Gothic literary texts, in which supernatural happenings were a regular occurrence. The innovation of film allows storytellers to give physical representation to humankind's fear of the unknown.

One of the earlier films to represent demonic possession is Benjamin Christensen's Danish horror classic, *Häxan: Witchcraft through the Ages* (1922). In *Häxan*, a nun becomes possessed by the devil, who makes her commit deviant, sacrilegious, and sexual acts. Perverse acts, often suggestive of sexual repression, became a motif in subsequent possession/exorcism cinema, especially beginning in the 1970s. Other early examples of the genre drew from Spiritualism and featured possession by ghosts including *The Thirteenth Chair* (1929), *Supernatural* (1933), *Charlie Chan's Secret* (1936), *That's the Spirit* (1937), and others. Haunted houses were a film trope even prior to 1922, and many early possession/exorcism film plots involve homes occupied by ghosts. Examples include *Barefoot Boy* (1938); *Hold that Ghost* (1941); *Ghosts on the Loose* (1943); *Ghost Catchers* (1944); *The Uninvited* (1944); *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1947); *The Headless Woman* (1947); *One Spooky Night* (1955); *House on Haunted Hill* (1959); *13 Ghosts* (1960); and *The Haunting* (1963). Many of these films were lighthearted. Several ended with a discovery that the house was not actually haunted. Their chief purpose

was entertainment, and several incorporated 3-D effects.

In the 1960s, possession/exorcism films took a darker turn with films like *The Innocents* (1961), *Dr. Mabuse vs. Scotland Yard* (1963), and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). This shift was likely a reflection of the era, in which the public regarded government and other institutions with increasing suspicion. This pessimistic world-view continued into the horror films of the following decade. By the 1970s the possession/exorcism film had become a distinct subgenre of horror film. Many possession/exorcism films of this era served as vehicles for social commentary. They emphasize a world-view in which the need to fight against evil is real, even if the institutions charged with defeating evil are no longer reliable. In such films as *The Devils* (1971), *The Demons* (1972), *The Exorcist* (1973), and *Killer Nun* (1978), it is religious authorities themselves who come possessed by demons. Additionally, many possession/exorcism films of the 1970s, including *The Amityville Horror* films (1979 et al.) and *The Omen* films (1976 et al.) concern families that have become threatened by demonic forces. These narratives emphasize the importance of preserving the family unit, even if society at large is unable to resist evil.

While sometimes critical of religious institutions, possession/exorcism films have continued to rely heavily on Christian themes and motifs. Even if Christian clergy are not featured in the plot, Christian religious objects such as crosses and holy water are commonly employed against the possessing forces. Numerous examples including *The Exorcist* films (1973 et al.), *The Antichrist* (1974), *The Other Hell* (1981), *Desecration* (1999), *The Convent* (2000), *The Order* (2003), *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* (2005), the *Paranormal Activity* films (2007 et al.), the *A Haunting in Connecticut* films (2009, 2013), *The Rite* (2010), *The Last Exorcism* films (2010, 2013), *The Devil Inside* (2012), *The Possession* (2012), and *The Conjuring* (2013) invoke Christian imagery and ideas. Sociologist Doug Cowan suggests that, to the extent that horror films succeed by invoking religious themes and symbols, they serve as an index of our culture's overall religiosity.

Film still from *The Thirteenth Chair* (1929), directed by Tod Browning. Shown: Margaret Wycherly (as Madame Rosalie La Grange). (MGM/Photofest)

While some possession/exorcism films have large production budgets, the majority are cheaply produced and expected to make a profit, either when placed in wide release in theaters or afterwards on DVD. Many such films make it straight to DVD, which can still be lucrative. Cheaply produced horror films are generally stigmatized by critics and audiences, which can discourage serious discussion of their historical or cultural significance. Current directors have found ways to reinvent the subgenre that make it more compelling and amenable to serious discussions. A notable example is the "live record horror" genre, a popular new take on the possession/exorcism film, in which a character is filming the action as it is happening. Live record horror appeals to modern audiences, who have the technology to easily make their own movies and who expect a greater feeling of participation in media and entertainment.

Another recent development is that possession/exorcism films have crossed over into other genres, especially comedy. Such films as *Repossessed* (1990), the *Scary Movie* series (2000 et al.), *Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead* (2006), *Rubber* (2010), and *This Is The End* (2013) play with the subgenre by using the tropes of the possession/exorcism film for either parody or pastiche.

In addition to crossing genres, possession/exorcism films have also crossed transnational and transcultural boundaries. Since *The Exorcist*, many

nations outside of the United States have produced possession/exorcism films. Examples include Japan's *House* (1977), *Ju-On* (2002), *Cursed* (2004), *Hide and Go Kill* (2008); Italy's *Beyond the Door* (1974), *City of the Living Dead* (1980), and *The Church* (1989); Spain's *[REC]* series (2007–2014) and *Exorcismus* (2010); and Germany's *Requiem* (2006). The popularity of the genre across cultures suggests that stories of possession and exorcism are compelling on a human level.

Douglas MacLeod

See also: *Amityville Horror, The*; *Exorcist, The*; Literature; Television

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GASTKRAMAD

Gastkramad, meaning "spirit embraced," is a belief in Swedish folklore that a person can become sick from an encounter with a spirit. Someone might be suspected of being *gastkramad* if they became ill suddenly or exhibited symptoms such as nausea, chills, general aches, or soreness in the body. One could become *gastkramad* either after being attacked by a spirit at night or by accidentally touching one during the day. The concept of *gastkramad* has parallels in cultures around the world, such as Native American traditions of "ghost sickness."

The word "gast" refers to unidentified spirits of the dead that are generally malevolent. Unlike the revenant, a spirit whose identity in life was recognizable by its appearance, the identity of the gast was always unknown. Even though the gast was usually described as a terrifying apparition, it was often invisible or took the form of an unusual black shadow when attached to a *gastkramad* person. The gast was considered to be especially dangerous at night when it could wander from the place where its body was buried. More rarely, one could also become *gastkramad* during the day. It was believed that gasts who neglected to return to their graves by dawn became trapped in the sunlight until dusk. Such immobilized and invisible spirits were called "*dagståndare*" or "day standers." Anyone accidentally walking through the spirit could become sick. To avoid getting *gastkramad* in this fashion, certain rites were used to make the *dagståndare* visible.

To determine if someone has been *gastkramad*, the person's body could be measured with a wool thread with a knot knit at each joint. The procedure was repeated three times, and if the results were different, the sickness was believed to be caused by a gast. If this was the case, a ritual was performed to remove the spirit and cure the sick.

Sara Duppils

See also: Dybbuk; Ghost Sickness

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GAY, ANTOINE

Antoine Gay (1790–1871) was the subject of an alleged case of demonic possession in 19th-century France. Although an exorcism was eventually granted by the Archbishop of Lyon, the persistent failure over thirty years to complete the exorcism and the spiritual suffering associated with the possession led those close to Gay to conclude his condition was the will of God.

Born at Lantenay in the department of Ain to middle class parents, Gay served in the military of the First Empire before working as a carpenter in Lyon. From a young age he was known for his extreme simplicity and piety. At the age of 46, he was admitted to the Cistercian Abbey of Aiguebelle as a lay brother. Suffering from signs of a nervous condition Gay was turned away from the Abbey shortly after his entry. It was later contended that a demon occupied Gay for nearly 15 years before anyone was aware of the fact.

In 1837 local authorities grew concerned over his increasingly erratic behaviors, which included convulsions, fits of rage, unexplained knowledge, and speaking in foreign or unintelligible tongues. The possibility of possession was raised by Father Burnoud, a former superior of the Missionaries of La Salette, and later supported by a Doctor Pitet dispatched at the behest of the Archbishop of Lyon in 1843. Pitet declared that Gay's outbursts were caused by some occult power that medical science could not detect. Despite these findings, Gay was not given an exorcism by any of the priests recommended to assist him. They refused, not because of a lack of belief in Gay's possession, but rather because they were hampered by persistent mitigating circumstances. For example, the Abbot of Aiguebelle, who received Gay in the autumn of 1843, agreed he was possessed yet could not exorcise him because of jurisdictional issues. Similarly, Jean-Marie Vianney, the Curé d'Ars who granted Gay an exorcism, never completed it and gave no explanation. These obstacles led those close to Gay to suspect his possession was divinely ordained.

Left to his own devices, Gay was held briefly as a lunatic by the city of Lyon before coming under the protection of Father Marie-Joseph Chiron, a priest whose ministry extended to those suffering from mental disturbances. Chiron recorded heated and academic disputes between Iscaron, the demon that possessed Gay, and his visitors. Iscaron was credited with unusual insight into the minds of those near him and predicting the future. He declared Mary's Immaculate Conception years before this became official Catholic doctrine. He also predicted the Franco-Prussian War. The demon was known to boast that "There has never been a possession like mine, and there will never be another."

Chiron died in 1853, and Gay lived his remaining years abandoned in the midst of a property dispute among his family. He became a tertiary of the Franciscan Order, taking the name of Brother Joseph-Marie. He lived on a simple diet of bread and water, wore a hair shirt, and scourged himself. Despite repeated requests to church officials and by the demon himself, Gay was never exorcised or able to receive confession. Iscaron remained with Gay until the moment of his death at Lyon in 1871. The life of Antoine Gay is the subject of J.H. Gruninger's *Le Possédé qui glorifia l'Immaculé,* which draws from a number of original documents and accounts assembled in part by a Parisian engraver named Houzelot and the biography of Father Chiron.

Sean P. Phillips

See also: Catholicism

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GAY EXORCISM

"Gay exorcism" refers to a controversial practice in which exorcism is used in an effort to change someone's sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual. This use of exorcism assumes that homosexuality is not only "unnatural" but directly attributable to demonic influence. There is no evidence that gay exorcism is effective, and many who undergo such rituals describe the experience as abusive and hurtful. However, advocates of gay

exorcisms insist the practice is done out of love and a desire to help homosexuals. Gay exorcism is found predominately but not exclusively in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and has been reported in both the United States and Britain. Gay exorcism was first developed in the 1970s and received increased media attention in the first decade of the 21st century alongside the political battle over gay marriage in the United States.

Methods of exorcism may include the use of holy water, anointment with oil, praying over the individual, and occasionally physical restraint. Those undergoing exorcism are often expected to vomit or froth at the mouth, which is associated with demons leaving the body. In some cases, it is believed that demons entered the body through homosexual contact, and prayers are directed toward each orifice to cleanse them of demonic presence. While some people elect to undergo gay exorcism, many of those exorcised are teenagers who are coerced by their parents. Gay exorcisms are often held in front of the entire congregation, causing feelings of shame and humiliation for the exorcised.

Gay exorcism is closely tied to the spread of deliverance ministry and the rise of "exgay" ministries that regard homosexuality as a neurosis can be cured through prayer and therapy. In 1973, the deliverance ministry text *Pigs in the Parlor* was published, claiming that homosexuality is caused by demonic influence. That same year, "Love in Action" was formed, a group that is regarded as the first exgay ministry. While the two movements share important similarities, some exgay ministries eschew gay exorcism as dangerous and counterproductive. By the 1980s, Pentecostal ministers were featured on television talk shows to advocate gay exorcism. Exorcist Bob Larson also produced televised exorcisms purporting to cure people of homosexuality. The practice continued to spread throughout the 1990s.

In 2009, a black, charismatic church called "Manifested Glory Ministries," in Bridgeport, Connecticut, posted a film of a gay exorcism on the website youtube. com. The film features a 16-year-old boy who is forcibly held down and appears to vomit into a bag as church members berate the "homosexual demon" within him. The incident brought increased media attention to the practice. Since 2009, gay advocacy groups in both the United States and Britain have recorded incidents of gay exorcism. In cases where gay minors appear to have been coerced and abused, these groups have encouraged child welfare services and other law enforcement agencies to intervene. In the United States, authorities have expressed reluctance to

intercede because religious practices are protected under the Constitution. However, a court has not ruled that abuse inflicted as part of a gay exorcism has any special Constitutional protection.

The spread of gay exorcism can be interpreted as a reaction to changing cultural attitudes, in which conservative objection to the growing acceptance of gays and lesbians is framed in demonological terms. A key example of this was Thomas Paprocki, bishop of Springfield, Illinois, who held a public exorcism in protest after his state legalized gay marriage in November 2013. In an interview, Paprocki explained that this was a "minor exorcism," akin to baptism, in which God's help is sought to repel the power of evil.

Joseph P. Laycock

See also: Deliverance Ministry; Larson, Bob; *Pigs in the Parlor*

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GENDER

Studies on gender and possession usually focus on possession in women, although possession also occurs in men. Erika Bourguignon, one of the first scholars to provide statistical data about the presence of spirit possession across the globe, found that women are more likely to experience possession. A common explanation for this disparity links possession to the deprivation of women, either social or psychological. The "deprivation theory" assumes that women turn to religious belief in and practice of possession because it allows them to exert power in cultures where they are socially marginalized. When women become possessed by spirits, gods, or demons, they must be taken seriously by the community. Furthermore, women cannot be punished for things they say and do while in a state of possession. Other scholars, however, argue that women have other choices for opposing deprivation and insist that women are drawn to possession voluntarily. Feminist scholars interpret possession as a tool of resistance for women, a feminine response to a culture that privileges men. A relatively new interpretation comes from cognitive theory, which links cognition, theory of mind, and religious

practices. Cognitive theorists argue that women are more involved in religious activities such as possession due to higher levels of empathy.

Saint Verano exorcising a possessed woman with the help of an angel. Unknown Pisan painter, 13th century. (Electa/Mondadori Portfolio via Getty Images)

Ioan M. Lewis's study on ecstatic religions highlights the significance of the social dimension by linking possession and trance with power asymmetries related to gender and class. His argument is based on the sociological differentiation between central and peripheral possession cults: Central cults, including such institutions as priests and shamans, uphold public morality while peripheral cults, such as the *zar* cults of northern Africa, threaten public order. He links this distinction to gender by arguing that when both types of possession (central and marginal) exist in the same society, central possession will be primarily reserved for men, while peripheral possession is restricted to women or men of lower status. His argument is that male-dominated cults sustain the prevailing moral values and members of such cults are usually leaders of the community. When they enter into trance, they represent authority and morality. Cults at the periphery of society, however, are dominated by marginalized social groups such as women, which use spirit possession as a strategy to achieve what they cannot achieve in a more direct way. Although Lewis describes women's possession

cults provocatively as “thinly disguised protest movements” directed against the dominant sex, he disagrees with the assumption that the deprivation of women in male-dominated societies is the direct cause of spirit possession. As an example he points to St. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582), who entered states of religious ecstasy and often described seeing demons. Instead of becoming a demoniac, she became a saint. Her success is remarkable even after her death as her experiences could easily have been reclassified as demonic episodes by the ecclesiastical authorities; instead, the church proceeded with her canonization. According to Lewis, therefore, the case of St. Teresa demonstrates how ecstasy and possession can empower the disadvantaged.

Anthropologists such as Susan Sered have critiqued the deprivation theory, arguing that it is condescending to women and misrepresents possession as a symptom of disempowerment. Janice Boddy shows, for instance, that it is possible to be peripheral in the political arena but central in another sector of society. She elevates the function of the possession cult for the women from a form of resistance to a sphere of dominance, creativity, and feminist consciousness. She argues that the female practice is not a peripheral cult but a central one because possessed women have dominance over men. Her work shows the importance of understanding the social variables that determine one’s position and influence religious practice.

An example of the impact of social changes on possession and gender can be seen with regard to studies of possessed women in Brazil. In her book about the social stratification of Candomblé communities, Ruth Landes presents Candomblé as a religion centered on women and homosexual men, whom Landes regards as socially marginalized figures. She argues that Candomblé gives both groups a position of power and enables them to express and develop their creativity. Her findings, which became quite significant in studies of Afro-Atlantic religions, confirmed a general impression that associated spirit possession with women. However, as new research in the last decades has shown, possession rituals in Brazil are no longer limited to the powerless. As Afro-Brazilian religions have become more socially acceptable, the gender ratio has also changed. Today one can find the same ratio between women and men in both Afro-Brazilian religions and in Christian groups in Brazil (about two women for every man). This development suggests that changes in socio-economic inequality, gender discrimination, and political oppression all have an impact on religious

practices, including possession.

Despite such evidence, possession is often discussed as a gendered activity that is predominately linked to women. Bourguignon explains this tendency by looking at the symbols and language used to describe possession. She suggests that the language people use to speak about spirit possession is derived from women's experience. For example, many cultures describe the human host as the "wife" of the spirit or refer to possession as "mounting" (in the sense that a spirit "rides" a human host as a "horse"). This sexual symbolism can even be found in Christianity, where people are described as "vessels," to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Bourguignon regards the soul as female and the Holy Spirit as male and describes the relationship as libidinous. Consequently possession is analogous to a sexual penetration, which might explain why in many cultures heterosexual men are less likely to engage in it.

Another contribution in this debate about women's predominance in possession rituals comes from Sered, who argues that possession is a normal human experience. As such, women's involvement in possession should be regarded as a natural ability rather than a response to oppression. Her own theory refers to the female body and its role in procreation; she argues that women's experiences during childbirth and heterosexual intercourse make them more receptive to others. In cultures that believe in spirit possession, this quality of receptiveness extends to spirits as well. Hence, she attributes the predominance of women who experience possession to a feminine-gendered ability. However, she also states that gender does not determine religious beliefs, despite its influence on ritual activities.

A new strand of research looks at gender and possession from a cognitive perspective. Emma Cohen and Harvey Whitehouse argue that when studying a universal trait such as spirit possession, it is possible to discover which aspects of it are biological and which are cultural. Cohen explains the higher number of female participants in possession rituals in Brazil by universal mechanisms of cognition that generate predispositions and tendencies towards certain patterns of thinking and behavior. This idea is linked with theory of mind (ToM) approach to cognitive science and the work of Simon Baron-Cohen. ToM refers to the mental ability to reflect on the content of one's own mind and to imagine the mind of someone else. ToM capacity is connected to brain types linked to specific cognitive activities, in particular systematizing and empathizing. Cohen's hypothesis is that people who test

high for empathic ability are better in certain religious activities because their ToM capacity supports the ability to analyze the social world and to understand the behavior of other people. Empathizing is especially important for possession because the brain in a state of possession needs to handle more than one mental entity, the possessing spirit and the host. Cognitive scholars argue that because women score higher on empathy measures than men they are also more involved in religious activities and in particular possession. This very materialistic argument, however, should not overshadow the significance of social and cultural factors that influence gender and possession.

Bettina E. Schmidt

See also: Afro-Atlantic Religions; Psychological Interpretations; Sociological Interpretations; Zar

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GHOST SICKNESS

Ghost sickness is the belief that the spirit of a deceased person can attach to the soul of a living person, weakening their soul or even drawing it with them into the realm of the dead. The English term “ghost sickness” is often used to describe the beliefs of particular Native American cultures, such as the Navajo. However, similar beliefs are found throughout the world. In cultures that believe in ghost sickness, people may experience physical symptoms including weakness, loss of appetite, nightmares, depression, fainting, and seizures. It is believed that ghost sickness can be fatal if the person’s soul is

drawn into the realm of the dead.

Many Native American cultures imagine death as a process of moving from one realm to another. Until a funeral ceremony is held, spirits of the dead are thought to linger near their bodies before passing on to the realm of the dead. It is during this time that ghost sickness is most likely to occur. Spirits that are lonely or confused may become attached to spirits of the living instead of passing on. Children are thought to be especially vulnerable to ghost sickness because it is believed that their souls are not yet fully attached to their bodies.

Methods of preventing ghost sickness often involve confusing spirits of the dead. Bodies may be removed from a house through means other than the door, such as a temporary hole created in the wall. This ensures that the spirit cannot return to the home the same way it left. The Kwakiutl people of British Columbia would sometimes dress their children as adults during funerals so that the dead would not recognize them as easy victims for ghost sickness.

If someone was afflicted with ghost sickness, it was believed that their soul was led further and further away from their body, causing their body to deteriorate. If their soul reached the land of the dead, the person would die. A shaman could heal such a person by traveling into the spirit world to find their wandering soul and return it to their body. Native American belief in ghost sickness is similar to ideas found throughout Western culture. For instance, there are numerous stories of people living in haunted houses, whose health deteriorates until a priest or ritual specialist is called in to re-establish the boundaries between the living and the dead.

Sara Duppils

See also: Gastkramad; Shamanism

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GLOSSOLALIA

The term “glossolalia” derives from the Greek roots *glossa* meaning “tongue”

and *laleo* meaning “to speak,” literally translated as “to speak in tongues.” Glossolalia is attributed to a spirit or deity’s possession of a human host causing him/her to speak an unintelligible pseudo-language consisting of quickly repeated syllables following tonal and pitch patterns but not adhering to identifiable syntax. Glossolalia is not to be confused with xenoglossia in which the host speaks a previously unknown but identifiably human language. Though practiced by various religious groups throughout the ages, glossolalia is most notably observed in the Christian New Testament and the 20th-century Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions evincing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament attests to the practice of glossolalia among Christians during the first century CE. These early Christians first experienced glossolalia at Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus Christ when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus’s disciples, causing them to speak in tongues. Some observers reportedly each heard the speech in their native language while others mocked the disciples as if they were drunk (Acts 2:1–18). Scholars are divided, however, on whether this account best exemplifies glossolalia or xenoglossy. Elsewhere, in the book of Acts glossolalia is experienced by those who convert when they receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44–46; 19:6; see also Mark 16:17). Saint Paul lists glossolalia among the gifts received by an individual who experiences the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:10). Paul presents glossolalia as a prayer language in which the spirit of an individual prays while the mind remains idle (1 Cor. 14:14–19). It is unintelligible to others (1 Cor. 14:2) unless one is gifted to interpret the utterances (1 Cor 14:13). Paul values prophecy above glossolalia (1 Cor. 14:18–19) because it speaks intelligible words that may benefit all worshiping participants (1 Cor. 14:6–12). Glossolalia in Christianity is described not as a divinatory experience in which the Holy Spirit controls or speaks through the human subject, but rather as a gift provoked by the presence of the Holy Spirit that remains fully subject to the will of the host (1 Cor. 14:27).

References to glossolalia outside of the New Testament are far less frequent and indicate that the practice fell out of use within a few centuries. Justin Martyr (ca. CE 150) mentions the practice of the gifts of the spirit in his day (*Dialogue with Trypho,* Chap. 88). Irenaeus (ca. CE 180) specifically attests to the continued practice of glossolalia (*Against Heresies* 5.6). During the late third and early fourth centuries CE Novatian (*Concerning the Trinity*,

Chap 29) and Hilary of Poitiers (*On the Trinity*, 8.33) list glossolalia as a gift of God to the church. By the time of Chrysostom (late fourth century CE), however, glossolalia appears to have ceased among Christians (*Homilies on First Corinthians*, 29.1). Augustine (early fifth century CE) similarly argues that glossolalia was granted to the early church alone and was no longer practiced by his contemporaries (*Homily Six on 1 John 3:19–4:3*, section 10). Thomas Aquinas (13th century CE) explains the cessation of the gift on account of it serving a function for the early church that the developed Catholic Church no longer needed (*Summa Theologica*, question 176). There are a few isolated accounts of groups such as the Moravians, French Camisards, and early Quakers practicing what may have been glossolalia after this cessation. Mormons, for example, claim Brigham Young spoke in tongues at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.

Speaking in tongues is done at a Pentecostal Church of God meeting at Memorial Auditorium in Dallas, Texas, August 25, 1964. (AP Photo/Fred Kaufman)

In the early 20th century, the practice of glossolalia experienced renewed popularity in William Seymour's Azusa street revivals in Los Angeles, California. Glossolalia featured as a central practice in the revivals evincing the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christian denominations (such as the Assemblies of God) emerging from these revivals thus retain glossolalia as an integral component of their worship services. The

perception of glossolalia as evidence of the Holy Spirit has led some strict Pentecostals to suggest that glossolalia is the only true evidence of a Christian's salvation. Others have adopted a moderate view identifying glossolalia as one of many "gifts" that a believer may exhibit (based on 1 Cor. 12). In the 1970s the practice spread into non-Pentecostal denominations such as Catholics and Presbyterians, sparking controversial debates and phenomenological studies. A reactionary group of worshipers termed "cessationists" emerged, contending that true glossolalia ceased to be practiced with the early church.

Scholars have conducted numerous nonreligious studies of glossolalia as currently practiced by Pentecostal Christians. Psychologists' early efforts sought to classify it as an abnormal psychological occurrence such as hysteria or schizophrenia, but these proposals have largely been abandoned. Christian glossolalia is not generally associated with hypnosis or a trance-like state (as with other religions), though a slightly altered state of consciousness is perceptible. The linguist William Samarin identified the speech as a pseudo language exhibiting sound and stress repetitions, without retaining any identifiable syntax. He suggested the sounds derived from one's native language. Felicitas Goodman, however, has conducted a broader cross-cultural study suggesting that there are cross-cultural similarities derived from a common altered state of consciousness.

The study of glossolalia outside of Christianity is complicated by the challenge of differentiating between utterances qualifying as glossolalia and other forms of ecstatic religious experience. Virgil's *Aeneid*, for example, describes a Cumaean sibyl who spoke "strangely" when possessed. Though this could qualify as glossolalia, it remains unclear. The modern practice of glossolalia outside of the Christian faith has been studied among various forms of shamanism. Unlike in Christianity, shaman glossolalia occurs during a divinatory experience in which a spirit inhabits a host to communicate. L. Carlyle May has noted that the Christian practice of whole groups or congregations concurrently speaking in tongues is not found among non-Christian religious practitioners of glossolalia.

Nicholas R. Werse

See also: Charismatic Movement; Holy Spirit; Pentecostalism; Xenoglossy

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GORDET, DOMINIC

Dominic Gordet was a parish priest from Vomécourt in the Dutchy of Lorraine. He served as an exorcist during an outbreak of alleged possessions in the larger neighboring village of Mattaincourt. Gordet was himself accused of practicing witchcraft and interrogated under torture. A surviving record of the interrogation held in April 1632 is an important piece of data for the study of exorcism in early modern France.

As early as 1624, Gordet had performed public exorcisms in Vomécourt that lead to the arrest of a local woman. From 1627 to 1630 Mattaincourt was the center of the largest known witch panic in Catholic Europe, featuring an epidemic of reported possessions. The village's long-serving vicar and *cure* (parish priest), Pierre Fourier—who would later be beatified as a saint—reported in September 1628 that "there are at least 85 people either possessed by the Devil or tormented by various kinds of bewitchments." Gordet and others arrived to assist with exorcisms. There is evidence that Gordet had sexual relationships with the women he exorcised and that these women retaliated by accusing him of witchcraft.

Historians do not know how many exorcisms Gordet performed at Mattaincourt, but the summary of the charges against him in April 1631 explains that at least seven people testified in Father Gordet's presence that they had seen him at the witches' sabbath. His first accuser was the same woman whose arrest he had arranged in 1624; released then, she had been rearrested, convicted and burned for witchcraft in 1630. The second was a young woman from Gordet's parish, who had also been burned in a neighboring district in 1630 for "parricide, incest, and witchcraft." Gordet was apparently the father of her illegitimate child. However, Gordet's five other accusers, also described as "convicted of witchcraft," cannot be found among the 50 witches eventually burned in this panic. The reason is that they

were legally underage for capital punishment. Historians possess baptismal dates for all five, yielding respective ages of 13, 11 (two boys), 10, and 7 when they testified against Gordet.

As a priest, Gordet was exempt from secular jurisdiction on criminal charges. But his ecclesiastical superiors possessed sufficient evidence against him, including unspecified "excesses" at exorcisms committed against women described as his "wives" (*épouses*), to have him tortured. The younger brother of Lorraine's duke, who was also Vicar-General of the diocese in which these disorders occurred, supervised Gordet's ordeal, which was carefully transcribed.

Had he made a full confession under torture, Gordet would have been defrocked and transferred to secular authorities for execution. But, like the woman he framed in 1624, he survived without confessing to witchcraft. He did, however, admit to committing fornication with his other adult accuser, claiming to have been drunk at the time. Historians have no idea what happened to Gordet afterwards or to the five underage witches who accused him. Probably none of them lived much longer as this part of Lorraine was buffeted by plague in 1632 and the full horrors of the Thirty Years War overwhelmed it after 1634.

William Monter

See also: Catholicism; Loudun Possessions

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HIGHGATE CEMETERY

"The Highgate Vampire" seized the imagination of Londoners in the late 1960s and early 1970s, prompting widespread commentary and even the visit of an angry mob to the historic cemetery. True believers long remained convinced of some kind of demonic activity at Highgate. Rival occultists made various attempts to ritually exorcise the evil presence at Highgate, fueling the panic. Highgate has become an important destination for what folklorists call "legend-trippers." These enthusiasts, mostly teens, visit sites reputedly connected to terrifying or wondrous events and creatures.

Highgate Cemetery dates to the 19th century, interring the remains of famous figures such as Karl Marx, Christina Rossetti, and George Eliot. A crumbling ruin by the 1960s, it became a meeting place for teenagers to scare themselves and to meet up for sexual adventures, before rumors of Satan worship and vampires became common.

The story that a vampire walked the dark lanes of Highgate grew out of a historical context increasingly fascinated with the occult. Rumors circulated throughout the 1960s of so-called "black magic circles" that desecrated graves throughout Britain. Beginning around 1963, some in the media and the police claimed to find evidence of "satanic rituals" at numerous cemeteries.

These rumors had two sources. First, a number of Anglican churches, closed in the latter half of the 20th century, left unattended burial grounds. These became rendezvous sites for young people, much like Highgate. It is likely that pranking teens kicked over quite a few tombstones and damaged a number of crypts, thus "desecrating" the graves.

The enormous popularity of Hammer's Dracula films also helps explain the interest in Highgate Vampire sightings, Hammer films frequently used the trope of ritual grave desecration, and demon possession in their revised version of the classic monster movie.

Highgate as a site of satanic activity first took the media spotlight in 1969 because of two occult investigators and alleged psychics, David Farrant and Sean Manchester. Manchester first garnered media attention for the idea of a vampire at Highgate, telling local television outlets that he believed a group

of Satanists planned to raise a vampire buried there. Manchester's narrative sounds remarkably similar to Hammer horror films such as *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* and *Taste the Blood of Dracula.*

In early 1970, local television stations and the local newspaper ran numerous stories on Highgate and its alleged occult connections. These local media outlets encouraged residents to report any paranormal experiences they might have had in relation to the cemetery. Numerous correspondents reported encountering the supernatural, but none agreed on exactly what they had seen or experienced. Some reported being chased by a ghostly bicyclist, others that they had seen an archetypal "Lady in White," while still others that they had simply heard ghostly voices.

Highgate Cemetery, London, 1993. (Francois Le Diascorn/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images)

On March 13, 1970 (a Friday the 13th), the British network ITV aired a special report on Highgate that bundled all these stories together with the help of Farrant and Manchester. By ten o'clock that evening, a large crowd gathered at Highgate. At least one hundred people broke into the older part of the cemetery and had to be chased out by local police using searchlights.

Excitement surrounding Highgate continued for much of 1970. Both Farrant and Manchester made frequent trips to the site. Local teenagers made pilgrimages in the middle of the night, leading to an increased police

presence around the cemetery. The BBC TV news magazine *Twenty-Four Hours* did a story on the cemetery in October, just in time for Halloween.

Frequent legend-tripping and media attention fueled the "haunted Highgate stories" for the next two years. By the summer of 1973, both Farrant and Manchester had lost their credibility with the public after the two challenged one another to a "magical duel" at the cemetery. Rumors and news stories circulated that a cat would be sacrificed during the proceedings and that participants planned to perform the ritual "duel" in the nude. In August of 1973, local police banned anyone from entering the cemetery except for mourners able to prove they had a friend or family member buried there. Police also made a point to arrest trespassers on sight, making "legend-tripping" less and less common.

Highgate remains important in the history of panics over alleged paranormal activity, in part because it took place at a time when British society had become increasingly secularized. The similarity of the stories that came out of the panic to Hammer Studio's incarnation of Dracula also reveals how important popular culture has become in shaping perceptions of the paranormal.

The Highgate Vampire tales may also have contributed to a series of British rumor panics in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Reports of more "grave desecrations," this time in Nottingham, received sensationalistic attention from media and the public and became a minor part of the transatlantic American/British "Satanic Panic" of the era.

W. Scott Poole

See also: Film

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HINDUISM

Hinduism includes numerous diverse religious traditions from the Indian

subcontinent. While Hinduism has many local beliefs and practices, most forms of Hinduism share a common root through a collection of Sanskrit texts known as the Vedas, which date back to 1500 BCE. Originally passed down orally by the Brahman priests, the Vedas include hymns and sacrifices to deities, magical formulas and rituals, philosophy, and metaphysics. Hindu tradition describes countless gods and spirits who sometimes possess human beings as well as rituals of exorcism to cure illnesses caused by unwanted spirits. However, Hinduism often does not distinguish the ordinary world from spiritual or transcendent reality as starkly as in Western theology. People, places, and objects can all be regarded as sacred mediums through which deities and spirits manifest their presence in the physical world. In this sense, "possession" is a core idea in Hinduism that makes interaction possible between the realm of the profane and the realm of the sacred.

Hindu traditions of spirit possession include accounts of possession by the gods, demi-gods (*asuras)*, ancestors, ghosts, and other spirit entities. Beliefs and practices regarding possession are often localized and may be informed by local stories of holy men and women, local interpretations of Hindu mythology, or nearby places and objects regarded as sacred. As in other parts of the world, spirit possession can be either positive or negative. Unwelcome possession is believed to manifest as physical or mental illness, and women and children are thought to be especially susceptible. For example, physical illnesses among children such as smallpox, associated with the goddess Śitalā in North India and Mariamman in South India, may be attributed to possession. Malevolent possessing entities in Hindu tradition include *bhūtas* (ghosts); *piśācas*, flesh-eating demons that cause illness; the *curail*, a form for a bloodsucking witch found in bamboo groves and banana or bel (wood-apple) trees; the *savat*, a spirit of a deceased first wife; *daityas*, nocturnal spirits said to dwell in the pipal tree; or entire groups of spirits that have died an unnatural death called either *brahmas* (not to be confused with Brahma, the Hindu creator god), *bhāvanīs* (if female) or *marūs* in the case of spirits who died because of the wrath of a goddess. All these malevolent spirits can cause troubles in the family and can dwell in the house as well as nearby areas.

Positive forms of possession include the presence of gods or other benevolent spirits. In ritual contexts a person may invite possession by a deity for purposes of healing, prophecy, blessing, or to allow worshippers a means of interacting with a deity and showing devotion. More often special objects

and places are used as mediums for gods and spirits. The most common medium is a temple icon (*mūrti*), but natural phenomena such as trees, plants, stones, and rivers can also be mediums for sacred power or homes for spirits. The most important example is the River Ganges, which is understood as the manifestation of the goddess Gangā. Various trees such as the peepal tree or the banyan tree are associated with either the god Brahma or Visṇu, but may also house malevolent spirits. Plants such as the *tulsī are* related to the goddess Lakshmī, and stones and rocks resembling Śiva's linga are related to Śiva. Places can also be perceived as imbued with otherworldly powers. Cremation grounds and deserted places are the traditional homes for inauspicious powers, while other places like riverbanks and mountains are thought to be pervaded by auspicious powers and are therefore important destinations for pilgrimages *(tīrthas).*

Linguistic references to possession are found in the oldest Vedic texts (the Samhitās from around 1500–1000 BCE), where the Sanskrit words *āveśa*, *grahana*, and *praveśana* all indicate different models of possession. *Āveśa* generally refers to the idea of "pervasion" or "immersion." This is a voluntary form of possession in which someone becomes "filled" with a deity, causing a significant shift in personality. *Graha(na)* meaning "grasping or seizing" and *praveśa(na)* meaning "to enter into" refer to involuntary possession in which person's personality is suppressed by the spirit entity. These types of possession can be either positive or negative and are caused by deities as well as ghosts or ancestor spirits *(bhūta, preta).* Beginning with the Samhitas, Vedic medicine regarded mental illness as a form of possession, requiring treatment by exorcism. The Ayur Veda contains advice on treating a possessed person as well as preventing possession through magical spells.

In addition to the Vedas, Hindu sacred texts include the epics *(Itihāsa)*, such as the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata written between 400 BCE and 400 CE, and the *Puranas*, stories of the gods composed between 400 CE and 1600 CE. This literature describes a cosmic battle between good and evil and also contains numerous stories of possession. Human characters, including kings, warriors, wives, and yogis, become possessed by gods and spirits, drawing them into the cosmic battle.

Positive and negative forms of possession are also prominent in medieval texts associated with Tantra, an esoteric tradition within Hinduism. Tantric texts such as the *Netra-tantra* describe a variety of malevolent spirit beings

that must be propitiated in particular ways to prevent them from afflicting people. These beings are classified into a hierarchical structure, with most orders of spirits organized according to the “great mothers,” spirits from whose wombs they originated. Each order of spirits has particular desires, and appeasing one of these great mothers with the appropriate offering such as rice, flowers, or meat means that their subordinate spirits will be appeased as well. The *Netra-tantra* is a North Indian text, but similar traditions can be found in Southern India. By diagnosing the possessing spirits and making the appropriate ritual offering, the Tantric practitioner can persuade them to leave. Other techniques described in Tantric manuals of exorcism include ritual cleansing with water or burning herbs, chanting mantras, or special prayers and offerings. Tantric texts also feature techniques for specific forms of possession related to caste, place, and to the most vulnerable groups, including women, people living on the edge of society, or those suffering from emotional distress.

In addition to sacred texts, notions of spirit possession also inform Hindu religious practice. Anthropologist Rich Freeman has suggested that the Hindu temple can be understood as the institutionalization of possession. The temple is often built in the shape of a reclining god and can be perceived as not only representing but also actually being a god. The images within the temple, especially the statues of Hindu gods *(mūrtis) are* likewise understood to house the spirits of deities. Through correct conduct during *pūjā* (temple worship), they become living representatives of a deity, which is signaled by the ongoing ringing of bells. In a sense, the statue becomes the god or is possessed by the god’s power. In this way, the *mūrti* makes the god accessible to the devotees and gives the worshippers the chance of a direct *darśana* (“sight”) of the god.

Hindu practices that regard *mūrtis* as embodied deities are closely associated with a devotional style of worship known as *bhakti*. *Bhakti* means “worship in affection” and emphasizes the mutual relationship that is established between the devotees and the god. Through *pūjā* worshippers are able to show their devotion to the deity using the statue as a medium. The *mūrti* is woken in the morning, given a morning bath, dressed, served with food during the day, and also put to bed at night. A crucial ceremony for making the statue a *mūrti* or the vehicle for the divine is the eye-opening ceremony, which is conducted when the *mūrti* is placed in the temple. This ceremony makes eye contact between the god and the devotee possible.

Through the gazing of the god the devotee will be purified and become closer to freedom from the cycle of rebirths. This mutual dependence is crucial to *bhakti* and cannot be established without the actual presence of the god in the statue.

It is generally believed that women and children are more vulnerable and therefore more susceptible to possession than men. Some Hindu traditions hold that female deities, characterized by active dynamic energy *(śakti)*, manifest themselves in the profane world more often than male deities. Many goddess temples throughout India have a "living icon," sometimes called a *śākta*, who is permanently present, embodying the goddess during daily worship before the devotees. The *śākta* is understood as a direct bearer of *śakti*, serving as an oracle and mouthpiece of the goddess. Devotees can approach them for healing and advice.

Well-known śāktas can be the center of local as well as global movements, as well as being a goal for pilgrims. One world famous śākta is Mātā Amritānandamayī from Kerala, India. She is known as "hugging Amma," and she travels around the world with a message of love, equality, and mutual understanding among all people, irrespective of their social status or religion. She is especially known for her healing hugs, and her āśram in Kerala has become a goal for retreats or pilgrimages among Westerners.

Marianne Qvortrup Fibiger

See also: Possessed Objects; Tantra; Teyyam

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Related Primary Document: Excerpts from the *Atharva-Veda-*

Saṃhitā (Hindu, Second Millennium BCE)

The Atharva-Veda-Saṃhitā *is a patchwork collection of prayers, hymns, and spells composed in the archaic language of Vedic Sanskrit. It is among the oldest surviving works of its kind, standing on the extreme edge of literary history.* AVS *VIII.6 is entitled by Ralph T.H. Griffith as "a charm to exercise evil spirits who beset a woman" (*Hymns of the Atharva Veda, *1895). But many of the dangers addressed in this passage are natural, rather than demonic. Nevertheless, they are regarded as susceptible to the charm's power. Thus, it is ambiguous whether these dangers are actually personifications of spiritual or demonic forces. Moreover, a number of terms for these items are* hapaxes*, words which appear only once in the entire surveyed Sanskrit canon and cannot be translated with complete certainty. In such cases, the later commentators interpret some of the* hapaxes *as "classes of demons."*

In this respect, I occasionally break from the tradition, for I endeavor, whenever possible, to offer a plausible English translation for these terms with what little can be discerned from the philological context as a whole. Still, in some cases there is no substantive basis for a translation. In such cases, the term has been left in Sanskrit, defaulting to the tradition's treatment as variant classes of demons, inimical tribes, or whatever seems most apt.

While the hymn is described as an "exorcism," it should be understood that possession, sickness, and misfortune are not necessarily treated as distinct phenomena by the Atharvan *authors. Sickness or misfortune signal the influence of supernatural forces, so that exorcism is not strictly distinguished from medical care. The supernatural plays an important role in the efficacy of medicine, and* vice versa*, medicine can impact the supernatural and the fates.*

In contrast to VIII.6, VI.111 and VI.113 have a stronger claim to confronting supernatural forces. This reflects the fact that they are not so much hymns of "preventative medicine," but reflect a culture of mysticism associated with states of ecstasy or insanity. AVS *VI.111, for example, is aimed at restoring a man's sanity, accomplished by gods or deities. The hymn first addresses the god* Agni*, who is fire personified, suggesting that the priest is bartering with the gods. Once they return the patient's mind to a calm state, he will be compelled to offer an oblation, though the hymn offers*

*us no indication of what this consists in, whether meat, grains, oil, or something else. These were offered into the fire itself, whereby they would be converted into smoke, which could then rise up, carried by intermediate guardian deities (*gandharvas*) to the gods in heaven.*

AVS *VI.113 uses an important term in relation to possession and exorcism:* grāhi. *A* grāhi *is an aggressive female spirit that seizes a host in an act of possession. I have translated the term as* succubus. *Sir Monier-Monier Williams relates the* grāhi *thus: "a female spirit seizing men (and causing death and diseases, swoon, fainting fit)." One of the earliest references is* Ṛg-Veda-Saṃhitā *X.161.1. Frederick M. Smith has written an impressively thorough work about the classical literary references to this class of spirits in his work,* The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization *(2007). Smith's volume provides a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding possession and exorcism in the historical context of South Asian culture.*

AVS VIII.6
Hymn to Expel I11-Fortune from the Woman

The begotten's pair, which mother has cleansed to attract a husband,
Never may the vile-named, whether *Aliṃśa* or cowherd, covet!

What defends with a poisonous stinger, whose lips poison a drink,
Causing tenderness, a parasite, an imp, an irritant,
Whose bite burns, creeping within clothes, neck-paining, causing faintness,
Do not conceal thyself! Flee! Never creep between this pair of thighs!

I make for her an herbal charm, driving away the vile-named!
Both ill-repute and high-repute are full of desire [for her],
The unregal we beat back; Good Name, of desires, is feminine.

Who, among the unregal, is dark-toned, has hair like *asuras*, has dreadlocks,
Or is snout-nosed, you beat [them] back with a sword from her genitals and belly.

Whether whiffers, kissers, fondlers, lickers, or consumers of corpses,
Today this yellow charm has driven the dog-tailed ignobles away.
Who lies upon you in sleep, having become a brother[in-law], and even a father[in-law],
The charm has gone after them, endowed with the form of eunuchs, of one furnished with fig-leaf head-dress.

Who sneaks upon you sleeping, or awakening you, threatens injury,
Like a shadow before the Sun, roaming on all sides, today [the charm] has destroyed them.

Who would make this woman to bear a stillborn or have miscarriage,
O radiant herb, Do thou scorch him, the greasy pervert, to destruction.

Who dance around inside houses in the evening, shouting like the braying of an ass,
The *Kusūlas*, and who are *Kukṣila*, *Kakubha*, *Karuma*, and *Srima*,
O Light-filled Herb, You with your widespread odor, do thou send them to destruction.

Who are *Kukundhas*, screeching monkeys, the hide-clothed, it endures.
Like eunuchs gesticulating in the woods, they who make a tumult,
You are hence the cause of their ruination.

Who do not tolerate Sūrya (the Sun personified), intensely blazing from above,
Unregal, a goat-herd, foul-smelling, mouths [stained] red [from chewing *paan*],
The *Makaka* beast, You drive all these away.

Who carry away a [sacrificial] portion,
Having caused to be placed such exceeding the proper measure for himself;
Kicking and striking the hips or buttocks of women with whips,
O Indra, do thou destroy the terrorizing demons.

Who come before brides carrying horns in their hands,
Who stand on burning coals, laughing mockingly, [hiding] in a tree

trunk,
Who are made thus, O Light, you are hence their destroyer.

Of whom the tips of the toes come behind in contrast to forward-facing heels and faces, Who were born in a barn, or born of dung-smoke,
The inauspicious entities called "*Uruṇḍa*" and "*Maṭmaṭās*" [undertakers?],
Grave-robbers [lit., "urn-snatchers"],
Whose "little mice" [testicles] are unfit for reproduction,
O God of the Knowers of Holy Prayer,
Do thou with insight repel them from her genitals.

Who are cock-eyed, blind, wifeless, let them be pallid.
Down, O Charm, do thou cause to fall,
All those single men who wish to snatch away a man's wife,
Whose hair stands on end, or who wear their hair long like a sage,
Who pressure a woman into sexual knowledge, groping,
Sneaking upon, prone to talk of many things, or at that, giving excessive praise,
Whose steps are hurled forth with the heel, like a quivering cow [kicking] a milkpot,
They who, from using sternutative powders,
Causes thy child to be born [premature] or to die,
May this *asofoetida* form a terrifying, heart-piercing bow.

Who, unawares, they cause infants to die, who lies down beside a recent mother,
Let the tawny charm carry the woman's sacrificial shares to the *gandharvas*,
Like a cloud carried off.

What has been circumambulated/encircled, may you cause that to sustain benefit,
A tail never befalling the embryo, O Potent Curatives, do thou protect, you will endure.

From the Spear-Nosed, from the Coral-Colored,
From the Poorly Rested, from the Nudist,

For Offspring, for Husband, the may Yellow charm protect, on all sides,
from all oddities.

Do thou protect all around from the Two-Mouthed, from the Four-Eyed,
From the Five-Footed, from the Fingerless,
From the Caterpillar even now drawing near, from the Frequent
Turning.

Whoever eats raw meat, human flesh, and who eats infants like carrion,
Long haired, from hence thou art the destroyer.

Who creeps upon the Sun, like a daughter-in-law [creeping upon]
father-in-law, pierce thou into their hearts, [you two that are the]
Tumeric and Charm.

O Tumeric! Do thou protect the one being born;
Never the male, a female, making;
May egg-eaters never injure the embryos,
driving away the distressful of whatever kind.

Whether childlessness, stillbirth, or still further, lamentation,
Mishap, or the pains of childbirth,
As if having placed upon thyself a garland made from a flowering tree,
O Dear, do thou fix thyself upon that.

AVS VI.111
Hymn to Return a Man from Madness

O Divine Fire, release unto me this man who is bound,
Well-fettered, chattering gibberish.

Following this, he will prepare a portion of the sacrifice to be taken by
you,
Whence he is no longer in ecstasies, in unreality.

Let Agni firmly pacify thee if thy mind stirs up,
I make, insightful, an herbal charm in such a manner,
Thou art driven mad no more.

Worked up into ecstasies from the mischief of divinities,
Frantic on account of malicious spirits,
I make, insightful, an herbal charm,
At which time, no further ecstatic madness in fantasy.

The Lordly Indra has today given you back from the vaporous nymphs,
The Lord of Sacrificial Portions today gave you back.

The Collective Divinities today have given you back in such ways
That thy being is no longer caught up in ecstasies.

***AVS* VI.113**
Hymn to Expel a Grāhi

Upon the Third, the Divinities were smearing this crime;
The Third wiped this sin upon Mankind.

Thence, If a Succubus has captured you, with Holy Song,
Let the Gods bring her to destruction.

Enter thou into the specks of dust in the air, go after the vapors rising!
O Calamity, go to the exalted ones!
Or, if not that, enter the foam of flowing waters!

O Lord of Journeys, wipe away the evil inroads of the Pregnancy killer!
Twelvefold, *Trita*'s [sins] were wiped off, deposited as sins of mankind.

Thence, If a Succubus has captured you, with Holy Song,
Let the Gods bring her to destruction.

Introduction and translation by Benjamin Albert McClintic

HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Christian Trinity, comprised of God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Spirit. As a part of the Trinity, the Spirit is one of three Persons with the same essence. Belief in the Holy Spirit and the Trinity are distinguishing features of Christian theology;

however, some groups identify as Christian without acknowledging a Trinitarian God. Confessional, orthodox Christians who adhere to the Christian tradition of the Trinity believe that once someone becomes a Christian, the Spirit dwells inside them spiritually. For most Christians, having the Holy Spirit inside oneself is permanent and does not entail an altered state of consciousness as in spirit possession. However, the New Testament also describes the state of being "filled" with the Holy Spirit, a temporary condition in which the Holy Spirit may guide Christians to speak in other languages or perform miracles. Some modern Christians, such as Pentecostals and Charismatic Christians, also become filled with the Holy Spirit resulting in a state of religious ecstasy.

The Holy Spirit is not regarded as God apart from the other two members of the Trinity. All three Persons of the Trinity are present at once in God and have the same essence. The Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the other members of the Trinity, but Christianity is split on the nature of the generation of the Spirit. In 1054 CE the Great Schism divided the Eastern church from the Western church. The Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity maintained that the Spirit descends directly from the Father; the Western Catholic and Protestant branches of Christianity held that the Spirit descends from the Father and the Son. Most Christians are united, however, in the other major doctrines of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit traces back to the Hebrew Scriptures or the Christian Old Testament. The opening sentences of the book of Genesis describe the Spirit of God hovering over the waters of the soon-to-be created world (Genesis 1:2). In the Christian Scriptures or "New Testament," there are instances where the Holy Spirit is present with the other two members of the Trinity. For instance, at the baptism of Jesus Christ the Spirit descends upon Jesus like a dove and God the Father speaks from heaven (Matthew 3:16–17). Between the New Testament era and the Edict of Milan in 325 CE, the earliest members of the Christian church began to articulate the doctrines of faith amidst political persecution. Early confessions of Christianity simply state, "I believe in the Holy Spirit" without elaboration. Over time with the legalization of Christianity, early Christians known as church Fathers, or the Patristics, put more effort into developing Pneumatology (the doctrines relating to the Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit as God, along with Jesus Christ and the Father was central to Christianity. Tertullian was the first person to coin the term *trinitas* ("Trinity") in the fourth century CE. As Christianity

grew and expanded, systematic theologies or *summas* began to emerge, attempting to put the tenets of the faith into coherent and organized pillars of thought that linked to each other. These systematic theologies ground the Christian tradition that has historically been considered orthodox.

Baptism of Christ, engraving 1617. The Holy Spirit is represented as a dove that descends on Jesus following baptism. (Universal History Archive/UIG via Getty Images)

In Christian tradition, the Holy Spirit is the active presence of God in the world today. As the representative member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit has certain activities and actions delegated directly to the Spirit. Most important, the Holy Spirit effects salvation, which is eternal life with God. Although salvation is made possible through the atonement of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, without the Spirit the Christian would not be able to participate in that salvation. The Spirit is the bridge between Christians and Christ and the deposit of salvation given to Christians (2 Corinthians 1:22). The Spirit is the Sustainer of the world and of creation. The Spirit also sustains Christians in the life of faith through comfort. The Spirit comforts Christians in times of distress and alights on the believer to sustain faith and bring hope to those in

sorrow and in need. The Spirit sanctifies Christians by making them ever more holy through purification of sin and assistance in moral living. The Spirit also sanctifies the community of Christians in the local and universal Church. While in the local church, the Spirit works as a ministering presence. The Holy Spirit calls and anoints the minsters of the individual churches, and these pastors and priests in turn provide guidance and council to parishioners through the work of the Spirit. The Spirit ministers to Christians and non-Christians through the witness of the clergy and laity. The Spirit also ministers to those within and outside the church by speaking through the prophets (a woman or man who receives an idea or scriptural passage from God transmitted through the Holy Spirit and is compelled to present the congregation or individual with what God has laid on their hearts). Finally, the Spirit ministers to the church and to Christians by inspiring Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16). After the biblical canon (the set contents of the Bible) was closed in the fourth century CE, the Spirit inspires readers of the scriptures to understand its theological and spiritual significance.

The Holy Spirit gives new inner spiritual life to the Christian on this side of the grave and eternal life to Christians after death through union with God in heaven. The spiritual life of Christians manifests outwardly through the fruit of the Spirit. Upon becoming a Christian, the Holy Spirit begins to endow the believer with evidence of faith that appears in stronger or weaker forms. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). These are similar to secular virtues but originate from a spiritual encounter with God. Likewise, Christians are also given gifts of the Spirit that are spiritually manifesting functions a Christian displays for the benefit of the Christian community. Unlike the fruit of the Spirit, which all Christians can attain to, a Christian only receives one or two of the gifts of the Spirit. Gifts of the Spirit are used at the discretion of the Christian, and are controlled by them alone. The New Testament lists of the gifts of the Spirit include prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy (Romans 12:6-8); words of wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, gifts of healings, miracles, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8–10); apostle, prophet, teacher, miracles, kinds of healings, helps, administration, tongues (1 Corinthians 12:28); apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor-teacher (Ephesians 4:11); hospitality, whoever speaks, whoever renders service (1 Peter 4:9–11); and marriage and celibacy

(1 Corinthians 7:7). Other gifts that appear throughout scripture are intercession (Romans 8:26–27) and martyrdom or witnessing (Acts 5:32). Clearly there is some overlap between lists. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are supernatural in that their origin is from God, but remain within the control of the believer.

While Christians agree that all of the gifts were in effect during the apostolic period (the time between the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2 and the death of the last apostle John, circa 90 CE), some Christians contend that the miraculous gifts ceased with the end of the apostolic era. Cessationists believe that the miraculous gifts, namely prophecy and tongues, *glossolalia*), but also healing, miracles, distinguishing of spirits and interpretation of tongues did exist in the New Testament era but no longer exist in the modern church (1 Corinthians 13:8–13). In contrast, the modern Charismatic movement in Christian churches is characterized by the belief in both the giving and the practice of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. Through baptism in the Spirit, those in Charismatic churches perform supernatural works in church services, but also outside of their church. The baptism of the Spirit described in Acts 2 is characterized by speaking in tongues and also prophecy, healings, casting out demons and exorcisms, and evangelism through powerful preaching. Scriptures indicate that even the most charismatic of gifts are under the control of the Christian (1 Corinthians 14: 27–33) and therefore theologically different from spirit possession in which the possessed are often not in control of their actions.

The prominence of the Holy Spirit has declined somewhat in mainline churches, likely due to the tradition of Christian theology focusing on topics like Christology (doctrines related to Jesus Christ); theology proper (doctrines related to God the Father); soteriology (doctrines related to salvation); and eschatology (doctrines related to the end times or last things). However, the Charismatic movement that emerged in the United States in the 1900s and is currently vibrant in the Southern Hemisphere has revived interest and academic study of the Holy Spirit. The second wave of feminism in the United States has also led to increased interest in the Holy Spirit as female theologians, especially in the Catholic church, have sought to recover feminine images and metaphors for the Holy Spirit.

While doctrinal positions regarding the Holy Spirit are no longer as prominent in Christian culture, it is likely that belief in the Holy Spirit and the Trinity will continue to be defining factors in the spread of Christianity.

Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are the fastest growing denomination in the world, due mainly to conversion in the developing world. Many Christian theologians speculate that emphasis on the Holy Spirit; the gifts of the Spirit; and spiritual warfare thrives in cultures that have an indigenous tradition of animism and belief in spirits. Many modern Christians also feel that emphasis on the Holy Spirit maintains ties to the early Christian Church as it emerged at Pentecost.

Cristina Richie

See also: Charismatic Movement; Glossolalia; Pentecostalism; Quakerism; Xenoglossy

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HOLY WATER

Many religions employ holy or blessed water for a variety of ritual purposes. Cultures around the world regard water as holy because it comes from a special source held to be sacred. Other religions, notably Christianity, employ rituals to consecrate water. Holy water is most often employed in rituals of cleansing or purification, such as baptism, or in blessing people and objects. In some traditions, holy water is believed to cure diseases and have other miraculous powers. Holy water appears in many rituals of exorcism, where its cleansing properties are thought to remove unwanted spirits.

Western ideas about spiritual purification through water begin in the Hebrew Bible, where ritual bathing or *mikvahs* are prescribed to maintain ritual purity. Certain transgressions specify that "living" water must be used, such as a spring. One of the few explicit references to "holy water" occurs in Numbers (5:12–31), which describes a ritual to determine whether a woman

has committed adultery. The accused woman must drink holy water mixed with dust from the tabernacle that is said to cause a miscarriage if she has become pregnant through adultery.

In the first century CE, Jewish rituals of purity were adapted into the Christian rite of baptism. While baptism is the Christian rite of initiation, it has historically been regarded as a form of exorcism. Early Christians such as Tertullian, writing around 200 CE, describe blessing water for use in baptisms. Historians believe rituals to bless water became necessary as Christians did not always have access to living water. A collection of treatises called the Apostolic Constitutions, written sometime in the late fourth century, is the first Christian text to describe specific protocols for consecrating holy water.

From baptism, Christians came to use holy water for a variety of purposes. In Catholic tradition, there are several types of blessed water: holy water used for baptism, holy water used for blessings, Gregorian water, and Easter water. Each of these is used for a different purpose, but all are consecrated by a priest. Baptismal water also contains sacramental oils. It is blessed on Holy Saturday (the Saturday before Easter). Holy water for blessings traditionally includes a small amount of exorcised salt. Exorcised salt has received special prayers directed for spiritual cleansing. Gregorian water is used to dedicate and consecrate a new church. It contains wine, salt, and ashes. Easter water is blessed water given to parishioners to take home for personal use. There is also a Catholic tradition of “non-liturgical” holy water. This water is not blessed by priests but comes from holy places, such as the spring discovered by Saint Bernadette at Lourdes, France. Catholic churches typically have fonts of holy water at the entrance so that church members may bless themselves as they enter. Priests may also use a tool called an aspergillum to sprinkle church members with holy water. Sprinkling holy water can signify a renewal of baptism, spiritual cleansings, and protection from evil.

Catholics used holy water in various forms of exorcism and for spiritual protection through the Middle Ages. The official Catholic rite of exorcism, published in the *Rituale Romanum* in 1614, calls for sprinkling holy water and tracing the sign of the cross with holy water on the possessed. By the early modern period, it was believed that possessed people would recoil from holy water as if burned. Some priests would test allegedly possessed individuals by sprinkling them with ordinary tap water. If they recoiled, this

meant their possession was feigned. Catholic uses of holy water also influenced Afro-Atlantic religions such as Santería and Voudoo. In these traditions, holy water may be used to cleanse a ritual space or as part of an exorcism. Eastern Orthodox Christians also use holy water for blessing and exorcisms. Instead of Easter, Orthodox Christians prefer to bless holy water on the Feast of Theophany, which commemorates the baptism of Jesus. Orthodox Christians may drink holy water, sometimes daily, during morning prayers.

Although Protestants generally do not use the term holy water, many Protestant churches use "blessed water" for baptism or in their liturgies. Anglican and Episcopalian churches feature fonts of blessed water for baptism and self-blessing as well as the aspergillum. Methodists and some Lutheran churches also perform blessings by tracing the sign of the cross on the head using blessed water. Baptists use blessed water for baptism and sometimes use rivers or other sources of living water.

In Islam, water from the Well of Zamzam in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, is considered holy. In Islamic tradition, the well was discovered by Ishmael, son of Abraham and Hagar. Drinking from the well is part of the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, and the well has never run dry despite millions of pilgrims. Zamzam water can be purchased in Muslim shops around the world, and some Muslims believe it has healing properties. Some traditions of exorcism in Islam involve drinking holy water.

Many Asian religions also use water for spiritual purification. Hinduism emphasizes ritual purity and has traditions of ritual bathing. The Ganges is regarded as the most sacred and purifying of all rivers. At Varanasi Hindus commit the created remains of loved ones to the Ganges. Ganges water is also collected and taken throughout the world. Shinto, as well as Japanese forms of Buddhism, often employ washing in cold water or under waterfalls to achieve spiritual purity. These uses of water are also found in some Japanese forms of exorcism.

Konnie G. Kustron

See also: Baptism; Catholicism; Cele, Clara Germana; Islam; Japan; Judaism; *Rituale Romanum*

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HUNKELER, RONALD E.

This 1949 case of alleged possession and exorcism has become one of the most famous due to subsequent novelization and media interest. For almost 50 years, the supposedly possessed boy remained publicly unidentified. Referred to as "R," "Roland," and "Roland Doe" in original reports, he was later dubbed "Robbie Mannheim" by writer Thomas Allen (1993). Later publication of unedited excerpts from original documents named the possessed boy as Ronald E. Hunkeler. A report or diary of the events simply titled "Case Study" was made at the time, of which several copies are believed to exist. Allen published a censored version in 2000.

The initial phenomena were reported to have occurred at the family home. This was initially believed to be 3210 Bunker Hill Road, Mount Rainier but was later correctly identified as 3807 40th Avenue, Cottage City, Maryland. According to the diary, events began on January 15, 1949, with unexplained sounds and the shaking of a picture of Jesus. Ronald had earlier been introduced to the Ouija Board by a relative said to be interested in Spiritualism named "Aunt Tillie," the pseudonym given to Mathilda Hendricks. Hendricks died on January 26, and the boy's mother, Odell Hunkeler, believed that her death was connected with the phenomena. At one point she allegedly asked the presumed spirit to make three knocks if it was Hendricks, and three knocks were heard.

The family turned to Rev. Luther Miles Schulze (1906–?), then pastor of Saint Stephen's Lutheran Church, Washington, D.C. Initially skeptical, he changed his mind after witnessing unexplained phenomena on February 17. However, Schulze believed that Ronald was the focus for poltergeist activity. In March 1949, he wrote to J. B. Rhine, then Director of the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University. Despite their exchange of letters on the subject, Rhine only met Schulze some time after the events had ceased and at no time had contact with the boy or his family. Rhine was probably

responsible for an account that appeared in the August 1949 *Parapsychology Bulletin*.

The diary referred to two medical consultations that declared the boy to be in a normal physical and mental condition. When Father Edward Albert Hughes (1918–1980) of Saint James Catholic Church, Mount Rainier, Maryland, became involved a more diabolical interpretation emerged. Hughes sought permission to conduct an exorcism, however, the family left to stay with relatives in Saint Louis and he was unable to proceed. At some point a Spiritualist was asked to perform an equivalent rite of exorcism, although without apparent success.

Over this period the range of phenomena reported in the diary included flying or thrown objects, shaking and moving furniture, markings (scratches and words) on the boy's body accompanied by physical pain, and further communication with a supposed spirit. Ronald also reacted with rage to religious services.

Following the move to Saint Louis, Father William S. Bowdern (1897–1983) was consulted. Subsequently, he sought and was granted permission by Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter to conduct an exorcism. Bowdern was assisted principally by Father Raymond J. Bishop (1906–1978), a lecturer at Saint Louis University, and Father Walter H. Halloran (1921–2005), then a Jesuit student at Saint Louis University.

A series of exorcisms took place between March 16 and April 18 at three locations in Saint Louis: the home of Ronald's uncle Leonard Hunkeler at 8435 Roanoke Drive; the Alexian Brothers Hospital; and Saint Francis Xavier College Church Rectory. During this period, Ronald cursed, spat, urinated, spoke in Latin, sang in a manic fashion, made bestial sounds, made sexually suggestive actions, and physically assaulted those in attendance. The diary also noted unusual flatulence. The final exorcism was apparently successful, and the diary ended on April 19 with Ronald attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion.

Ronald was reported to have married, had children, and at some time returned to the Washington D.C. area. His story inspired William Peter Blatty to write *The Exorcist* (1971), later released as a motion picture by Warner Bros. in 1973. In contrast to the situation presented in the diary, Sergio Rueda discounted demonic possession in favor of a conversion disorder accompanied by both Ronald's conscious deception and genuine poltergeist activity.

Leo Ruickbie

See also: Blatty, William Peter; Conversion Disorder; *Exorcist, The*; Ouija Board; Spiritualism

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HURSTON, ZORA NEALE

Zora Neale Hurston, primarily noted for her novels and short fiction of the Harlem Renaissance era, was born in Notasulga, Alabama, in January 1891. Moving to Eatonville, Florida, during her youth, Hurston soon was captivated by the rich culture of this all-black community, from the tall tales of men gathered on the general store porch to the unique dialect of the African American people. Her time in Eatonville ultimately served as the foundation for her literary endeavors; in works from *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (1934) to *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), she strived to preserve the vibrant culture of her youth. Later, fascinated by black culture worldwide, Hurston began to explore in depth their religious traditions, treating their beliefs in spirit possession and demon expulsion as real spiritual phenomena, unlike the later works, films, and so on that presented popular yet fictionalized accounts.

Through her fiction works, Hurston eventually cemented her place within the American literary tradition. But for Hurston, fiction was not the only medium for artistic and cultural exploration. Motivated by the anthropological teachings of her mentor Franz Boas at Barnard College between 1925 and 1927, Hurston traveled across the country in search of stories, gathering folklore she desperately sought to preserve in a collection entitled *Mules and Men*, published in 1935. In *Mules and Men*, Hurston paved the way in terms of cataloguing black religious customs outside of the

Judeo-Christian tradition by recording stories of hoodoo culture from Florida and New Orleans, many dating back to the days of slavery. Throughout the collection, Hurston introduces these stories such as the origin of hoodoo and the various rituals of this religious tradition, including how to curse and harm others with magic.

Later in her 1938 non-fiction text *Tell My Horse*, Hurston continues both her anthropological and ethnographic project, recording her experiences with Vodou traditions, witchcraft, and zombies throughout Haiti. This work, often criticized for its political commentary, is noted for presenting a serious study of Vodou spirituality and culture—different from the sensational accounts more common in other works. In chapter twelve, for instance, Hurston recalls her travels to a Haitian municipality, Archahaie, where she encounters the Vodou ceremony known as the feast of the dead. Here Hurston first describes the deceased body as it bolts upright, its glaring stare both piercing and unexpected as Dieu Donnez, head of the family, performs a traditional Vodou chant. Later Hurston describes the process as Donnez addresses the dead in a unique African vernacular, the content of his conversation varying with each communion with the dead.

Portrait of author and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston with a Haitian drum, ca. 1937. (Library of Congress)

In the same chapter, Hurston also serves witness to what she describes as spirit possession. From the crowd around her, she is surprised by the strange, guttural noises of a man whose sudden and violent flailing creates murmurs among the people of an evil presence. Hurston notes a physical transformation in this man, his face becoming a frightful mask only paralleled by the aura of evil the people abruptly notice all around them. Though a relatively small scene, this event and the subsequent clash between Donnez, perceived as a powerful and experienced *houngan* (or priest), and this evil spirit are vital to Hurston's examination of Archahaie's religious culture. In doing so, she attempted to capture another aspect of the black experience.

Though Hurston died in 1960 after a bout with failing health, her impact in recording these black religious subcultures remained. In 1981, the posthumous collection *The Sanctifed Church* was published, including several articles on hoodoo culture and traditions. From the publication of her

three anthropological works, Hurston sought to garner increased attention to areas of black religion underrepresented in existing scholarship and conversation of her time. At the same time, she tried to preserve the stories she encountered as evidence of spiritual and cultural phenomena worthy of additional artistic exploration. Her studies of voodoo and hoodoo religious traditions then became the foundation for several of her fictional works such as "Black Death," a short story published after death that examines the role of voodoo in the black community. These contributions, though largely underacknowledged in the body of Hurston criticism, are a large part of her life's work and thus a significant contribution to our understanding of black culture as well as the role of spirit possession around the world.

Christopher Allen Varlack

See also: Afro-Atlantic Religions; Loa

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I

IBBUR

In Jewish folklore and medieval Jewish mysticism *ibbur* refers to a unique form of spirit possession that is frequently benevolent. *Ibbur* literally means "impregnation" or "conception" and was frequently understood as a phenomenon in which the host body was "impregnated" by the soul of a saint (*tzaddik*). Unlike *dybbuk* possession, *ibbur* possession would not feature violent behavior or psychological disturbances. Instead, the spirit might help the possessed perform an otherwise unattainable *mitzvah* (a religious duty), provide special clairvoyant abilities, or bestow a distinct charismatic aura that benefits the community. Due to these positive features, the phenomenon of *ibbur* took place with the consent of the possessed and was always temporary.

The spirit present in *ibbur* possession would usually be that of a "charismatic preacher" or a "heavenly mentor" known as a *maggid*. The term *maggid* originated from a position in traditional Jewish communities wherein the *maggid* would preach to the people while the rabbis were more concerned with studying Jewish law. People possessed by a *maggid* would often enter states of spontaneous preaching or protracted spells of automatic writing. One of the best known examples of an *ibbur* possession by a *maggid* is the story of the famous 16th-century Rabbi Yosef Karo, the author of the most important work on Jewish law the *Sulchan Aruch* (*The Code of Jewish Law).* Karo's mystical diary *Maggid Meisharim* (*Preacher of Righteousness)* was allegedly completed over 50 years as a result of recurring nightly visits by Karo's *maggid*.

Although an *ibbur* could take place unexpectedly, special techniques were devised to invite this form of possession. In the 16th-century Lurianic Kabbalah (a mystical tradition founded by rabbi Isaac Luria) the active encouragement of *ibbur* could assist the incomplete soul of a living person to achieve a state of spiritual rectification (*tikkun*). Self-induced forms of possession led to practices such as *hishtachut*, or "gravesite prostration," still widely practiced in mystically inclined orthodox communities in present-day Israel. It was hoped that praying near the grave of a saint would make the

prospects of reaching a positive union of souls (*yihud*) more likely. Such activities were usually accompanied by various forms of purification and could result in a state of religious ecstasy.

Yair Lior

See also: Automatic Writing; Dybbuk; Judaism

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INCANTATION BOWL

Originating from the central and southern regions of late-antique Mesopotamia (fifth to eighth centuries CE), the "Incantation Bowl" also known as the "magic bowl" and occasionally as a "demon trap," was a magical device used most often to ward off misfortune. Most were plain, unglazed earthenware vessels, typically no larger than 200 mm or 8 inches wide and often little more than 600 mm or 2.4 inches high. In this respect, they were similar to the kinds of ordinary tableware typically used in late Antique Mesopotamia. What makes these otherwise typical vessels distinct are the incantations inscribed upon their surfaces. In the majority of cases, the nature of these incantations are overwhelmingly apotropaic; that is, they claimed to protect their owners from a variety of the common misfortunes, from illness and infertility to every other conceivable harm caused by demonic and human foes. Less frequently, incantations were used to attain economic prosperity, success before a judge, or the attention and reciprocal affection of a romantic interest. The bowl, along with its incantation, was often deployed or "activated" by burying it upside down within a variety of different domestic contexts, such as under the threshold of a room or in the foundations of a house. In these instances, the incantation's effect was likely believed to extend to the entire domestic setting.

In addition to the content of their incantations, the manner in which the bowls were inscribed is also interesting. Typically adopting a spiral design, the author of these charms would often start from the middle of the vessel's

surface, slowly rotating and curling each successive word around the former in a clockwise fashion until reaching the outer edge. Some have suggested this spiraling pattern added to the power of the incantation, luring the demon and trapping it within the center of the bowl. There are, however, other patterns of composition, including those that divide the surface of the vessel into separate columns, and those that follow the outline of the demonic entity to whom the incantation was addressed. Often alongside these incantations are a variety of graphical depictions, including religious symbols, magical signs, and what appear to be depictions of the identified demon incarcerated with chains and shackles. While the bowls say nothing about who wrote them, it can be assumed from the extraordinary scribal skill exhibited by most of these objects that the authors were skilled professionals who may have produced other similar manuscripts, which have since been lost. Indeed, the bowls are the only known manuscripts from the period that have survived in square, Mandaic, and Manichaean script.

Near East/Central Asia: Manichaean incantation bowl, Aramaic written in Syriac script, 5th–7th century CE. (Bridgeman Images)

The practice of this fascinating craft was not unique to any one of the

ethnic or religious cultures of Late Antique Mesopotamia. Of the 2,000 or so bowls that are known to exist, either in museums or in private ownership, the majority have been written with the Aramaic square script of Mesopotamia's Jewish communities. However, significant quantities were also written in the Mandaic script belonging to the Mandeans, Manichean Syriac, and a smaller quantity still in the Estrangelo Syriac script of Mesopotamia's Christian communities. Alongside these Aramaic examples, a few were written in Pahlavi, Arabic, and a variety of largely indecipherable pseudo-scripts or "gibberish" scripts, which are only an imitation of an alphabet and are perhaps little more than the squiggles of an illiterate author. The evidence suggests that the practice of incantation bowls ended in the early period of the Islamic conquest. A few examples written in Arabic can be found in the British Museum collection, yet the rarity of these texts indicates the decline of this medium throughout the seventh century, and its eventual disappearance by the eighth.

The breadth of dialects and languages that can be detected and distinguished demonstrates the far reaching impact of this practice and the worldview that it embraced upon Mesopotamia's various faith groups. Jews, Christians, and Mandeans, as well as other religious groups such as Manicheans, lived side by side in the Late Antique context of the Mesopotamian valley. By studying their incantations archaeologists can gain important insights into patterns of inter-cultural exchange, collaboration, and even overlap between these groups that are simply not seen in other sources from this period. The incantations were not edited or redacted over time, but were the ad-hoc products of practitioners responding to the immediate and intimate needs of their individual clients. As such, they provide the historian not only with a unique time capsule of the Late Antique Mesopotamian contexts in which they were produced, but an unprecedented and fascinating glimpse into the desires, fears, and individual concerns of those very ordinary, Late Antique Mesopotamian individuals who commissioned them.

Bradley D. Barnes

See also: Ancient Near East; Islam; Judaism

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EXORCISTS

The International Association of Exorcists (IAE) is a network of Catholic exorcists formed in 1990 to disseminate information about possession and exorcism. Catholic priests may elect to join the IAE with the permission of their bishop. Members pay annual dues that fund the IAE's newsletter, a biannual international meeting in Italy, and occasional national and regional meetings. The group is not backed by the Congregation of Divine Worship, the Vatican organization that is charged with maintaining and updating the rites and procedures for exorcism; however, in 2014, its statutes were approved by the Congregation of Clergy, which oversees matters related to priests outside of religious orders.

The IAE should not be confused with the International Catholic Association of Exorcists or the American Association of Exorcists, each of which are independent associations. The IAE offers membership only to Catholic priests while the International Catholic Association of Exorcists includes Orthodox Christians as well as laity. The IAE has, however, invited lay men and women who assist during exorcisms, including medical professionals, to attend its meetings.

The IAE was founded by six priests, including Gabriele Amorth, the exorcist of the Diocese of Rome, and Jeremy Davies, a former physician and exorcist of the Archdiocese of Westminster, England. The group held its first meeting in Rome in the summer of 1992. Two years later, the group elected Amorth as its president. Amorth retired from this position in 2000 but remains honorary president for life. Amorth's colleague, Italian exorcist Ciancarlo Gramolazzo, took over as president until his death in November 2010. Gramolazzo was succeeded by Cipriano de Meo. The IAE's international membership has grown to 500.

The IAE feels that cases of demonic possession are on the rise and that more exorcists are needed. Its members are culturally conservative and

attribute the rise of possessions to such influences as New Age religion, the declining cultural authority of the Church, homosexuality and sexual promiscuity, and cultural influences such as Ouija boards and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels.

The IAE's relationship with the Catholic Church is ambivalent. While the IAE's mission receives support from some members of the Church hierarchy others regard this group as an embarrassment and a distraction from the social mission of the Church. In 2001, 150 priests from the IAE requested to attend a public audience with John Paul II in Saint Peter's Square and were not admitted. Amorth took great offense at this exclusion and claimed that the Church hierarchy had abandoned its duty to perform exorcisms. When the Catholic rite of exorcism was reformed in 1998, IAE members lobbied against the reforms and requested that the old rite remain available as an option. These efforts were unsuccessful; however, the Italian Conference of Bishops did ask the IAE to create a set of terms to describe the varieties of extraordinary demonic activity. At the IAE's suggestion, the Council endorsed the terms "infestation," "obsession," and "oppression" to describe forms of demonic influence more extraordinary than temptation but less severe than possession.

In 2004, the IAE drew attention when it helped to organize a conference on exorcism in Mexico City inaugurated by Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera. The conference drew over 500 participants including exorcists from throughout Mexico. The IAE's expertise was also sought in 2006 when Paolo Scarafoni organized a course on exorcism at the Regina Apostolorum, a Vatican Seminary. Scarafoni initially requested that an IAE member perform an exorcism in the classroom so that students could observe. However, then president Ciancarlo Gramolazzo declined, explaining that a public exorcism would be dangerous and unethical.

Christopher Cumo

See also: Amorth, Gabriele; Catholicism

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ISLAM

Spirit possession is a widespread phenomenon among Muslims across the world and is related to the conventional belief in what can be called the twin creature to the human, the *jinn* (singular: *jinnee*). Unlike other creatures, humans and *jinn* possess a capacity for free will and accountability before God. But humans are understood to be of a denser creation from clay (earth and water), while the *jinn* are seen as a more subtle creation from "smokeless fire" (fire and air). They are considered to occupy an invisible existence separate yet parallel to humans, from which they can see humans but not be seen by them. Possession can be of inanimate (buildings, trees, statues) as well as animate objects (animals and humans), and so spirits are exorcised from both. Unlike demons, *jinn* are not necessarily evil and may possess people out of malicious and benign intentions. Islamic texts describe a number of reasons why a spirit might possess someone, including because of love or lust for the person, as an act of revenge on the person responsible for some perceived mistreatment, as an attempt to protect the person from some perceived danger, for the simple sake of fun or mischief, in an effort to corrupt the person for purely evil reasons, or in service to some sorcerer.

However, the effects of possession are most often considered negative by the majority of Muslims, with it being seen as a cause of physiological and psychological illness in humans. This idea is reflected in the spectrum of influence *jinn* are thought to have over humans, which ranges from "satanic whispers" and other forms of auditory, visual, and cognitive intrusions on the thinking of a person; to partial possession of a particular organ or part of the body, resulting in pain, weakness, and damage to that particular part; to complete control over the entire body of a person, including the ability to speak through the person and more directly dictate his or her behavior. Arabic terms for spirit possession indicate a historical connection to mental illness. *Mass* specifically refers to madness, *Sara'* is a word that is applied to epilepsy, and *majnun* is the common word for someone clinically insane, as well as someone possessed by a *jinnee*. This ability to effect both physical and especially mental health, is also attributed to the two other supernatural forces often mentioned together with possession, that is, the evil-eye (*ayn*), a glance or stare from an envious observer that involuntarily results in harm or damage upon the observed person or object, and sorcery (*sihr*), the practice of a group or individual with malicious intent attempting to influence another through various nonphysical means, often involving the use of incantations

and the service of *jinn*. With these three "causes" often associated together, exorcism in Islam is often mentioned in reference to treatment of all three, with the common purpose being to extract or evict these negative forces from the host.

The idea of spirit possession was prevalent among the Arabs even before the dawn of Islam, but came to take on the characteristics we associate with it today through the authoritative influence of the Qur'an and the collected traditions of Prophet Muhammad (*Hadith*). The dominant pre-Islamic method of treating the possessed was through incantation (*ruqya*). The Prophet limited this practice to methods that did not contradict the fundamental monotheist tenant of Islam but still endorsed *ruqya* as a means for curing and protecting against spirit possession, as well as a variety of related problems, such as poisonous bites, the evil-eye, and sorcery. Furthermore, the invocation of God and use of verses from the Qur'an for such purposes paved the way for the distinctive character of magic and healing in the Islamic tradition. For this reason, an understanding of exorcism in Islam requires some familiarity with the common use by Muslims of the Qur'an as an instrument of power. The "instrumentality" of the Qur'an refers to its ubiquitous usage within the day-to-day life of almost all Muslims. In Muslim cultures, verses of the Qur'an are invoked for expression or to add emphasis as part of daily speech. They also pervade the landscape, appearing on posters, road signs, and the walls of buildings. Hence, the use of Qur'anic incantations specifically within the context of healing is a specialized version of such invocations in daily speech, with particular verses or whole chapters seen as efficacious towards particular health problems. These incantations may also include prophetic prayers or prayers utilized by famous saints or scholars. They are often accompanied by "dry-spitting" (*nushra*) on water, food, medicine, or directly on the recipient. Often, talismanic inscriptions of these verses serve as literary counterparts, intended to be placed somewhere, worn on the body, or otherwise written on a utensil or paper to be washed in water for drinking.

It is in this context of "healing by language" that the dominant form of exorcism in Islam is best understood. These Qur'anic healing practices have been widely espoused throughout the medieval period and into modern times by way of instructional literature that includes simple chapbooks of Qur'anic incantations or how-to booklets on talismans or amulets, as well as entire Qur'anic texts published with notations on the relevant verses for preventing

and curing various ailments. Qur'anic healing is often associated with a wider tradition known as "Prophetic Medicine." This involves interpreting the sayings and deeds of the Prophet to develop treatments for certain illnesses or to promote certain dietary and therapeutic techniques. These medical traditions were assembled into collections entitled "Medicine of the Prophet" (*al-tibb al-nabawi*), forming a genre of hadith literature that underwent gradual development from collections of hadith in the ninth century to actual medical books by the 14th century that integrated it with established medical and magical explanations of the era. Some of these methods are still seen as particularly effective in exorcism, such as the removal of toxins through cupping, as well as the use of special ointments and herbal concoctions. In many ways, exorcism through Qur'anic incantations can be considered part of this Prophetic tradition.

The combination of Qur'anic invocation and Prophetic Medicine is still by far the most common method for exorcising spirits; however, there are other methods of exorcism practiced by Muslims, often in conjunction with these. A number of these methods involve compelling other spirits, either by appeasement or force, to exorcise those possessing a person. Some dedicated practitioners for instance, employ the service of *jinn* whom they have compelled to aid them through various private rituals (long periods of meditation, summoning rituals, etc.). These *jinn* are typically employed in addition to Qur'anic incantations and Prophetic medical treatment to exorcise spirits. The *zar* ritual and cultural variations of it is another popular example of this. It is a type of group healing ceremony where more powerful spirits are evoked in order to relieve the possessed of the lesser spirits troubling them. The ritual is led by an experienced healer who serves as chief negotiator between the helpful spirits and the afflicted. The healer is assisted by a sort of sorority or fraternity that encourages the evocation and appeasement of these spirits through an assortment of means, including fumigating the space with incense, beating on drums and tambourines, playing the lyre or flute, hand clapping, singing, entrancing the possessed person, and animal sacrifice.

Another form of exorcism involves those possessed spending extended periods of time around the shrine of a saint. Considered divinely blessed spaces, evil spirits in particular are understood to react unfavorably when brought near to the shrine, eventually leaving their host. Shrine compounds often house aides who guide the possessed person through a series of

supplementary rituals that can include Qur'anic incantations and other typically Islamic methods of exorcism, together with the evocation of "friendly" spirits known to occupy the area due to its blessedness.

Taking help from spirits in exorcism is a controversial practice in contemporary Islam, with many modern reformers considering such practices magical rather than religious. Significantly, even exorcists that align themselves with such reformers, still demonstrate a reliance on *jinn* in the form of lengthy dialogues with the possessing spirit in order to gain information for a successful treatment. Additionally, many modern Muslims regard exorcism as a superstitious practice that contradicts a scientific understanding of the world. Some contemporary Muslims have attempted to integrate traditional exorcism with modern medicine. This has resulted in theories of how spirits interact with the human nervous system and, in some cases, incorporating shock therapy and other psychiatric techniques into exorcism.

Yusuf Muslim Eneborg

See also: Jinn; Morocco; Pakistan; Zar

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Related Primary Document: Excerpt from Ja'far Sharif, *Islam in India*, 1832 (Muslim, 19th Century)

Ja'far Sharif was a Sunni Muslim and a tutor of languages for the Madras government in Southern India. He worked with G. A. Herklots, a Dutch-born surgeon, to compile a compendium of beliefs and practices used by Indian

Muslims. The work included an extensive section on magic including rituals for summoning and exorcising jinn. Below are Sharif's notes from his study of Muslim traditions of exorcism in India. They describe an eclectic set of practices that includes invoking the sovereignty of God, inducing a trance state in the possessed, and the use of both threats and bribery to obtain compliance from the spirit.

Ja'far Sharif gives his experiences as follows: I have always been accustomed from my youth up to study the practice of exorcism or incantations (*da'wat*), the writing of amulets and charms, the consulting of horoscopes and the prognostication of the future. Many a time have persons possessed by the devil consulted this humble student, and either by the recital of supplications (*du'ā*), or by some wise contrivance of my own, they have been cured. I used to feel much doubt regarding the effects produced and I firequently said to myself, 'O God! What relation or connexion can possibly exist between the *Jinn* and men, that the former should possess such powerful influence of the latter, or that by the recital of incantations they should be cast out?' With these doubts in my mind I continued studying the subject, consulting learned men and divines and reading standard works on the subjects like the *Tafsīr*, or Commentary on the Koran, the Hadīs, or Traditions of the Prophet, and others, in order that I might acquire knowledge of these matters. I have related what I have seen.

When persons suffer from demon possession the symptoms are: some are struck dumb, others shake their heads, some go mad and walk about naked, they feel no inclination to do their usual business, but lie down and become inactive. In such cases, if it be required to make the demoniacs speak, or to cast the devil out, various devices are employed which will now be described.

The use of the magic circle or geometrical figure to control the *Jinn* is very like the Tantrik methods used in India, or the Yantrams of the Madras Presidency. Magic circles, squares, and figures are drawn on the ground, or on a plank with various coloured powders, cowdung ashes (*bhabhūt*), ashes, charcoal, or sandalwood, and when the demoniac is seated in the centre of the figure, the incantation (*afsūn*) is recited. Round these diagrams fruit, flowers, betel, sweets, and sometimes spiritous liquors are placed. Some people sacrifice a sheep before the circle, sprinkle the blood round it, and place a lamp lighted with a charmed wick (*palītā*) upon it. Or they merely kill a fowl and sprinkle the blood round it. Some give a rupee or two to a person

possessed by the devil, who has to place it within the diagram. Then the Arabic incantation given below is recited over some cowdung ashes, or over five kinds of corn, the exorcist each time blowing on the object and throwing it at the head and shoulders of the demoniac. Or he breathes on flowers and throws them at him. He burns some perfumes such as powder (*abīr*) aloes (*‘ūd*), benzoin or gum benjamin, coriander (*dhaniya*), wood aloes (*agar*), or sandalwood near the patient, and recites the invocation twenty-one times, directing the patient to sit with his eyes shut, and to smell the fumes well while he repeats the supplication. During the recital of the incantation, if any motion of the body be observed the exorcist should say, ‘If thou be a male devil bow thy head to the right, if a female to the left, if a hermaphrodite forward’. Some demons violently shake the head and body of the demoniac. When the recital is finished, the exorcist asks the patient whether he feels any intoxication, lassitude, sense of weight in his head, any fear in his mind, or if he believes that some one behind him is shaking his head. If any such symptoms appear, the case is one of demon possession, otherwise not. The idea of a demon catching the patient is nonsense, derived from the fancies of the common folk. The incantation (*afsūn*) is an appeal to various demons, Fathūna, Habībeka, Almīn, Saqīka, Akesan, Balīsan, Talīsan, Suradan, Kahalan, Mahalan, Sakīan, Sadīdan, Nabian, and it invokes them by the seal (*khātim*) of Solomon, son of David, to come from the east and west, right and left.

Incantations to cause a devil to enter a person’s body in Arabic, Persian, and Hindostānī are very numerous, but I have omitted them as they can be learnt from those who practise the art. Some devils when they seize a person do not let him go for two or three weeks, nay for as many months. The demoniac then never speaks, and though the devil may be present in him he does not move or walk. To prevent certain devils from escaping, the exorcist ties a knot in the hair or the demoniac after reciting in Arabic the following verse of the Korān three times and blowing upon it: ‘His command when he willeth aught is but to say to it “Be”, and it is. So glory be to Him in whose hand is the sway over all things! And to this shall ye be brought back’. Some read the following verse eleven times over some sweet-smelling oil and blow it into the ear of the patient: ‘We also made trial of Solomon, and placed a phantom [one of the *Jinn*] on his throne, whereupon he turned to Us in penitence’. Sometimes they recite the following invocation to God Most High, and blow it into one or both ears of the patient: ‘O Hearer! Thou

knowest with thine ears, thine ears are within hearing, O Thou Hearer!'

After the demoniac is fully possessed by the devil he screams, takes a lighted wick (*kākrā*) and goes on lighting and extinguishing it by putting the lighted end in his mouth, or he bites a fowl and sucks its blood. When he begins to speak with some degree of sense, the exorcist asks the name of the demon, his sign, whence he came and whither he is bound, what he was doing or causing to be done while he was in the body of the patient. If he answers, well and good. If he is silent the exorcist recites an incantation over a rattan, and gives the demoniac a sound flogging which makes him tell everything. For some devils are so wicked that they will not reveal their names, nor say when they intend to depart. The strange thing is that the flogging leaves no marks on the body of the demoniac. Then the exorcist asks what he desires in the way of food. He must get whatever he asks for—a pound or two of millet or fried rice, dumplings (*mtakulā*), curdled milk, boiled rice, curries or meat, fish or fowl, eggs, a sheep, liquor, sweets, fruits, flowers, lamps made of flour lit by wicks soaked in butter, two images, male and female, made of flour, anything else the demon wants. These things are arranged on a large potsherd, or on a winnowing or common basket, which the exorcist waves three times from the head to the feet of the demoniac, first in front then behind. The contents he afterwards distributes among beggars, or he places the whole under a tree or on a river bank. This is to be given in alms on the day when the demon says he will depart.

When the times comes the exorcist asks the demon in what place he purposes to throw down the demoniac when making his exit, and what he intends doing with him. He answers, 'On this very spot', or 'Under such and such a tree', and 'I wish to take with me meat, offal, and so on', or 'nothing at all'. If the exorcist does not approve of this he says, 'Nay but thou must throw him down here, or in the yard of the house, and thou must take a shoe or sandal in thy mouth, or carry a grindstone on thy head'. When the demon departs he runs with such speed and makes such a noise that people flee from him in terror. The demoniac firequently runs away with stones so large that two or three men could hardly lift them. Sometimes he runs away without taking anything. The exorcist must continue holding him by his hair, either at the back or side of his head, and he must let him lie wherever he falls. Then he recites the incantation or the Throne Verse, Āyatu-l-kursī or the Korān: 'God! There is no God but He, the Living, the Eternal! No slumber seizeth Him no sleep! His, whatsoever is in the Heavens and whatsoever is in the

Earth! Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His own permission? He knoweth what hath been before them and what will be after them. Yet naught of His knowledge shall they grasp save what He willeth. His Throne reacheth over the Heavens and the Earth, and the upholding of both burdeneth Him not; and He is the High, the Great!' This is recited over an iron nail or a wooden peg, which he strikes into the ground. The moment the demoniac falls down, the exorcist instantly plucks out one or two hairs from amongst those which he holds in his hand, recites some recognized spell over them, puts them in a bottle and corks it up, whereupon the demon, which beset the patient is supposed to be imprisoned therein. Then he either buries the bottle in the ground or burns it, after which the demon never returns.

Excerpted from Ja'far Sharif, Islam in India or the Qanun-I-Islam, *translated by G. A. Herklots. London: Oxford University Press, 1921.*

JAINISM

Jainism is a religious tradition that, like Buddhism, emerged in North India at the end of the Vedic period, in the fifth century BCE, and is known for its adherence to asceticism and the principle of nonviolence. The Jains are the followers of the Jina ("victor"), the conqueror of worldly attachments and passions. Jainism does not have a single creator; rather, in every cosmic time cycle 24 omniscient Jinas, or Tīrthaṇkaras ("ford-makers" over the ocean of rebirth) appear in succession to teach the doctrine of Jainism and establish the four-fold community (*tīrtha*) of monks, nuns, lay men, and lay women. Mahāvīra (d. ca. 425 BCE), who is believed to be the last Tīrthaṇkara of the present age and often seen as the founder of Jainism, was a contemporary of the Buddha, predeceasing him by several years. Unlike Buddhism, Jainism never spread outside of India and remained intertwined with various forms of Hinduism. It is not aberrant for the Jains to pray in Hindu temples, celebrate Hindu festivals, and even address themselves as Hindu. The principal sectarian division within Jainism is between the Śvetāmbara ("white-clad") tradition, in which monks and nuns don white cotton garments, and the Digambara ("space-clad") tradition, in which male mendicants wear no clothes.

The idea of spirit possession is often seen as problematic in light of Jain beliefs about reincarnation, salvation, and the nature of living beings. It defies the practice of self-control and asceticism, which is vital to annihilate karma and attain liberation, and implies that ghosts and deities can be more powerful than ascetics. However, the phenomenon of spirit possession is documented in Jain classical texts and modern ethnographies concerned with Jainism where possession is characterized by both positive (oracular, voluntary) and negative (disease-provoking, involuntary) forms.

The Jain Śvetāmbara canonical literature (third century BCE through the early centuries of the Common Era) largely treats possession as a negative and destructive event leading to the loss of control over one's senses, which inevitably entails dangerous consequences. The *Antakṛddaśa* (Pkt. *Antagaḍadasāo*) (6.3) contains a story about a garland-maker, Ajjuṇae, who

was possessed by the *yakṣa* (protective deity) Moggarapāṇī after he questioned Moggarapāṇī's existence. While possessed, he proceeded to kill seven people every day until the pious Jain merchant Sudaṃsaṇe crossed his path. As Ajjuṇae prepared to attack, Sudaṃsaṇe took monastic vows and by merely looking at Ajjuṇae, forced the *yakṣa* to relinquish Ajjuṇae's body and return to the shrine. Another canonical text, the *Vyākhyāprajñapti* (Pkt. *Viyāhapannati*) (14.1), better known as the *Bhagavatī* (Pkt. *Bhagavaī), names possession by a yakṣa* as one of the two causes of madness (*umāya*).

These examples demonstrate the Jain mistrust of spirit possession, which stems from their specific understanding of liberation and the relationship between karma and soul. Jainism maintains that the souls of all living beings are physically bound by karmic matter from the beginning of time. The accumulated karmic particles trigger further accretion of defiling karma, thus perpetuating the deluded state of the soul and rendering it incapable of attaining liberation. In order to halt the influx of karma and shed the already existent fetters, the scriptures prescribe rigorous forms of mental (e.g., meditation) and physical (e.g., fasting) asceticism. It is this onerous austerity that brings practitioners closer to salvation by allowing them to gain absolute control over the sense organs and rendering them unattached to any worldly object. Spirit possession, however, represents the very opposite of self-control and self-restraint and therefore comes into conflict with the tenets of Jain doctrine as laid down in the scriptures.

Possession figures in later classical texts of Jainism, evincing a greater diversity in the ways it is conceived. Possession of another's body is presented as a yogic technique in the *Svopajñavṛtti*, the autocommentary of the 12th-century Śvetāmbara philosopher Hemacandra on his *Yogaśāstra*. While Hemacandra offers detailed guidance for a *yogin* on the mechanism of entering another's body and navigating it, he notes that this ability will not accomplish the primary goal of liberation.

References to cases of spirit possession also occur in Jain hagiographies, in which ascetics prove to be instrumental in relieving those possessed by demons. One of the most famous among them is the Jain adaptation of a Hindu story about the adventures of the king Vikrama included in the *Pārśvanāthacaritra* (3.105-324). King Vikrama received the art of entering another's body and, being deceived by his wicked Brahmin-friend, had to travel in the body of a parrot before making it back to the palace. Possession in the Jain *Prabandhas* (biographies of prominent ascetics) is often

associated with the discontent of a former relative who died an unnatural death. Such beings *(vyantarī, vyantara)* often become clan protectors once they have been propitiated. Moreover, in the *Purātana Prabandha Saṇgraha* (§221), possession serves to determine the outcome of a dispute between Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras vying for control over Mount Girnār, an important pilgrimage site in both traditions. They agree to use a *kumārī* (young prepubescent girl) as a medium and abide by what a deity says through her. A somewhat similar story is found in the *Prabandhakośa* (§51). While this text contains a less explicit reference to the state of possession, it features the summoning of young Śvetāmbara and Digambara girls for the resolution of the conflict in regards to Mount Girnār.

The textual references to possession by clan deities are consistent with modern ethnographic accounts, which attest to a tutelary deity's (mostly goddesses') possession cult. The goddesses' possession can be either harmful and dangerous or beneficial and helpful. The latter takes place in the form of an oracular possession enabling communication between the members of a clan and their guardian goddess through a medium (*bhomiā*).

Other forms of positive, desired possession are represented in the Nākoḍā Bhairava cult and Akram Vijñān Mārg. Nākoḍā, the protective deity of the 23rd Tīrthaṇkara Pārśvanātha, is believed to possess lay people. The possessed obtains the status of a mediator between the deity and the people and therefore receives considerable respect and veneration, offering oracular services and giving blessing to visitors. Possession in the Akram Vijñān tradition, originating in the 1960s in Mumbai and Baroda, was ritualized into an initiation ceremony and has remained the major element of its belief system. The movement offers instantaneous salvation through the experience of supreme self-knowledge obtained from the living Tīrthaṇkara Sīmandhara Svāmī himself by means of the mediator Dādā Bhagavān speaking through the spiritual leader of the movement, thereby circumventing the scriptural insistence on physical austerity and monasticism.

The ethnographic material also presents negative, disease-provoking forms of possession induced by evil and malign spirits and demons. The Padampura temple outside of Jaipur (Rajasthan) is well known for healing such afflictions. The possessed are brought to the temple for the evening *āratī* performed before the sixth Tīrthaṇkara Padmaprabhu and subsequently taken to the shrine of the *kṣetrapāla* (protective deity of the land), who is believed to drive the *bhūt*s (ghosts) out on the order of the Jina. Among other methods

of exorcism the ethnographic sources list the chanting of special mantras, practice of asceticism, and aid of professional and amateur exorcists.

In the monastic community, possession manifests predominantly in its adverse guise as demon-attacks. This type of possession is often linked to sexual desire in that the *bhūt*s enter nuns' bodies intending to establish intimacy with them. One of the ways used to combat the *bhūt*s is the intensification of one's personal practice of self-restraint. The ethnographic accounts point to more firequent occurrences of possession among nuns than monks. The phenomenon of spirit possession in the mendicant community is often seen to signify imperfection of monastic discipline and lack of spiritual potency since Jain cosmology holds mendicants higher in rank than other living beings, including gods and spirits. Therefore, Jain monastics generally treat possession as a dangerous event that is detrimental to their lifestyle. The responses of Jain laymen to spirit possession, however, are less homogenous and vary from reprehension to mistrust to approval.

Aleksandra Gordeeva

See also: Buddhism; Hinduism

Further Reading

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Related Primary Document: Account of Taking Ownership of Mount Ujjayanta (Girnār) (Jain, 13th to 15th Century)

From this account, included in the anthology of stories entitled the Purātana Prabandha Saṇgrahawe *we learn about the contested status of Mount Girnār,*

an important pilgrimage site in medieval times as well as nowadays. The story illustrates how Śvetāmbara Jains, Digambara Jains, and Buddhists employed various strategies to take over this holy site, including philosophical debates, violent wars, and ritual. The last proved to be the most reliable way of determining the outcome of the dispute over Mount Girnār between the Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras.

In the story, the goddess Ambikā appears at night to the layman Dhārāka and instructs him to obtain help from the court poet and Śvetāmbara Jain monk Bappabhaṭṭisūri, who knows powerful mantras and has vyantaras (*minor deities*) *under his control. It is only Bappabhaṭṭisūri who is able to invoke a deity to manifest in the body of a kumārī (young prepubescent girl) by means of some consecrated powder that he prepares after deep meditation. When the layman Dhārāka sprinkles this powder over the kumārī's head, the deity begins to speak through her. The verses, uttered by the girl, indicate that Mount Girnār should come under control of the Śvetāmbaras; this is clear from the fact that the verse mentions the possibility of salvation—or, crossing the ocean of saṃsāra (cycle of rebirth)—for both men and women. In the Digambara tradition, women are believed to be incapable of attaining liberation, because they are never allowed to be nude, and therefore are unable to overcome an attachment to being clothed.*

This story reveals the complex nature of religiosity in medieval Gujarat. We learn that King Āma worshiped the 22*nd Jain Tīrthaṅkara Neminātha, while his consort Kamalādevī worshiped the god Śiva (Someśvara). We also learn about the central role of mantras, deities, magic, Tantric rituals, and spirit possession in the Jain tradition.*

In the land of Saurāṣṭra, in the city of Gomaṇḍala, lived a very wealthy Śvetāmbara layman named Dhārāka. Having gathered a pilgrimage party, he and his seven sons set out to worship at the *tīrtha* (holy pilgrimage site) of Ujjayanta, accompanied by seven hundred soldiers and thirteen hundred chariots. After Dhārāka had worshipped Yugādi (Ādinātha) on Mount Vimala (Śatruñjaya), he arrived at the foothills of Mount Raivata (Girnār). Mount Raivata used to belong to the Digambaras; and they had secured it for themselves by defeating in debate the Buddhists, who had controlled it for fifty years before the Digambaras took it. It had now been under the control of the Digambaras for twelve years.

On arrival, Dhārāka informed the Tantric teacher, skilled in eighty-four rituals, about his intention to worship the Lord Neminātha on Mount Raivata.

The teacher said that he would let Dhārāka go to the *tīrtha* only if he became a Digambara. Then Dhārāka thought to himself, “Even if my life depended on it, I would not repudiate my teacher. However, I will not go back without worshipping at Ujjayanta.” The layman became distressed; seeing that, his sons inquired about what had happened and Dhārāka said, “I can not worship at Ujjayanta.” The sons could not understand why their father wanted to visit the holy site that belonged to the Digambaras, but Dhārāka explained to them that previously the *tīrtha* had in fact been owned by the Śvetāmbaras and that the Digambaras had only recently taken control of it.

On hearing that, the sons reassured their father that they would force their way in and bring the holy site back into the Śvetāmbara fold. Once they had announced their intention to worship at the *tīrtha* even if they had to employ force, the Tantric teacher ordered his devotee Khaṇgāra to send an army. Thus, a battle began between the armies of Dhārāka and Khaṇgāra, which led to the death of Dhārāka’s seven sons and seven hundred soldiers. The layman Dhārāka, leader of the pilgrimage party, stopped eating. On the third day of his fast the goddess Ambikā spoke to him, “Son! King Āma rules in the city of Gopāla, in the land of Kanyakubja. In his last birth he was an ascetic and practiced austerities on Mount Bhūṇḍa, as a result of which he has been born as a king. Bappabhaṭṭisūri stays with him. Only he can defeat them, and no one else. He knows powerful mantras and has control over powerful *vyantaras* (minor deities). Now that you know this, go there.” Dhārāka left his pilgrimage party and headed to the city of Gopāla together with eight laymen.

Bappabhaṭṭisūri was entertaining the king and his courtiers with expositions of great poetic beauty when Dhārāka appeared before him, bowed down to him, and conveyed the urgent request of the pilgrimage party. The king threw an angry look at the layman, and the monk asked Dhārāka to tell them all about what had happened. Delighted at hearing the true state of affairs and learning of the wondrous power of Mount Raivata, the king undertook a solemn vow to abstain from food until he had worshipped Nemināth. Then his wife, Kamalādevī, also took a vow to fast until she worshipped Someśvara (Śiva). After that, all of them left for Mount Raivata, bringing along one lakh bullock-carts, twenty thousand camels, seven hundred elephants, one lakh horses, three lakh foot soldiers, and twenty thousand laymen. On the thirtieth day, they arrived at Stambhatīrtha. The goddess Ambikā spoke to the king at night, “In response to your steadfast

faith, Neminātha will appear before you. You should break the fast at dawn. When you see an auspicious diagram with flowers on it, dig through it, and Neminātha will appear to you." The next morning everything happened as the goddess had foretold, and the king was able to worship Neminātha. When Kamalādevī reminded the king that it was time to break the fast, he said, "How will I do that without you?" At that very moment, Someśvara's liṇga emerged before them. Then King Āma provided merchants with money for the construction of two temples on the bank of the river, on a spot that Somanātha (Śiva) pointed out to them that very day. The king said, "Erect two temples [dedicated to Neminātha and Someśvara] in this town; we shall see them on our way back." They set off. A messenger was sent to the pilgrimage party to inform them of their arrival.

Bappabhaṭṭisūri reasoned with the Tantric teacher, "If we fight, a lot of people will die. So let us determine the victor through debate." They summoned witnesses and the debate began. When the debate had been going on for a month, King Āma and Dhārāka said to Bappabhaṭṭisūri, "The debate is lasting too long." And so the monk announced that he would put an end to it on that very day.

On the thirty-first day, the Jain monk said to the Tantric teacher, "Today we should bring a *kumārī* (young prepubescent girl) into a circle, and the *tīrtha* will belong to whomever she will give it to." The teacher agreed to abide by what the *kumārī* said. The Digambaras decorated the *kumārī* in the circle, but they could not bring the deity into her. Then Bappabhaṭṭisūri began to meditate in his lodgings, after which he gave some consecrated powder to Dhārāka and sent him back to the *kumārī*. Dhaāraāka sprinkled the powder on to the head of the girl, and the deity began to speak through her:

> Even one word of praise to the Vardhamāna, the best of the Jinas, will enable a man or a woman to cross the ocean of *saṃsāra*. I worship Dharmacakravartin (Turner of the Wheel of Dharma) Ariṣṭanemi (Neminātha) who became a monk, attained enlightenment, and achieved liberation on Mount Ujjayanta.

Everyone heard these two verses coming out of the *kumārī*s mouth. Therefore, from that day on, the *tīrtha* has been under the control of the Śvetāmbaras.

Introduction and translation by Aleksandra Gordeeva

JAPAN

A late 19th-century account of contemporary religious practices in Japan describes the Japanese as people who are easily possessed. According to its author, Percival Lowell, the quantity of possessions witnessed in the country was unparalleled in other modern nations. Not only was each form surprisingly common, there were a surprising number of forms. Nearly every kind of creature could possess people, including evil spirits as well as gods.

Historical and literary sources as well as anthropological surveys and fieldwork demonstrate the pervasiveness and varieties of possession (*kamigakari*) in Japanese society and its enduring presence in the modern world. Practices of possession and exorcism occupy a large part of the religious landscape of Japan, transcending the dichotomies between established and popular religion, as well as the differences between what are today considered the two major religious traditions of the country, Shinto and Buddhism. Specialists of possession draw from both these traditions in their practices, for historically Shinto and Buddhism existed in a peculiar combinatory way (and combined with other practices from China), sharing world-views, deities, rites, and sacred space.

Possession and Possessing Agencies

Possession in a Japanese context should be seen first of all as a socially constructed and accepted idea. It presumes a belief in theurgical pathology, that is, the understanding that illness and other problems may be caused by spiritual agencies and can be cured by prayers and incantations ritually performed by particular religious specialists. The belief in the efficacy of such remedies is not affected by the development of scientific knowledge and has, in the past as in the present, coexisted with the use of traditional (Chinese) medicine or western medicine.

Two dynamics of possession emerge from the field: (1) unwanted possession, which may require exorcism, and is enacted by spirits often considered negative; (2) possession, both solicited and involuntary, which empowers, and involves positive spirits. Symptoms of possession are described in literary sources and field reports as both physical and mental. Mysterious pains, loss of appetite, the discomfort of pregnancy, and the difficulty of childbirth were traditionally attributed to the work of spirits. Hallucinations and altered personality are also observed. Unwanted

possession may be seen as a sign of the possessed person's wrongdoings, but this does not necessarily mean that possessed people are marginalized within their society. In fact, possession may also give voice to the disenfranchised, especially women.

Agents that cause unwanted possession (*mononoke*) include a great number of spirits, both human and not, who become vengeful (*onryō*, *goryō*) and cause illness and even natural disasters. Different classifications have been made of these agencies. The most recurrent ones may be grouped into three categories:

- Spirits of the dead (*shiryō*). These are people who have died an untimely or violent death or who, after dying, have kept the grudge against others that they had in life. They possess people because they want the living to act on their behalf so that they can be liberated from their suffering. The figure of Sugawara no Michizane, a ninth-century state minister who died in exile, is perhaps the best known historical case of a vengeful spirit. His spirit caused the death of those who had been involved in his banishment, and in order to pacify it, Sugawara was deified and became the protector god of students. (This may be considered an example of what scholars have called transformational exorcism.) Family members who remain attached to the world and need proper ancestral services are a large component of this class of spirits. Reports from the northern areas of Japan struck by the tsunami in 2011 document numerous cases of possession by the spirits of people who drowned in the tsunami.
- Animals. The folklorist Yanagita Kunio split animal possession into two distinct types: snakes and foxes. Narratives on both animal spirits abound, but fox possession (*kitsune-tsuki*) is arguably the most widespread and articulated form of animal possession. Since early times foxes have been considered to be mischievous beings with supernatural powers, which are able to change into human beings, often to mislead them. However, not only wild animals but also the spirits of domesticated birds, animals, and fish may become dangerous spirits when they are slaughtered and killed. Contemporary reports of possession in the areas of the recent tsunami, for instance, include cases of people reported to jump up and down suddenly on all fours and snarl like beasts, possessed by animals that drowned along with their masters.
- Demons (*oni*) and gods, both Shinto *kami* and the Buddhist *devas*.

Mythological chronicles of early Japan, such as the *Kojiki* (considered a Shinto sacred text), attributed diseases and plagues to the malignant spirits of the gods. Buddhist manuals for exorcism identify a hierarchy of demons, of whom Mara is considered the most dangerous. Demons and gods attack the body as well as the mind of people, making a person sick and causing her to die, and arousing wicked behavior.

The second type of possession enables people to transmit the words of spirits and deities and thus empowers the possessed person. Japanese sources speak of "calling down a god" (*kami oroshi*) or the spirit of a deceased person (*hotoke oroshi*), who then speaks through the possessed person, acting as a medium (see below). The spirits affecting this type of possession include a range of well-known or newly created Shinto or Buddhist deities as well as the spirits of the dead, and animals, such as foxes, are understood also to be vehicles of deities.

The fluidity of the phenomenon of possession often eludes the analytical dichotomies outlined by scholars. The same spiritual agencies may be involved in both types of possession for, it is worth noting, in the Japanese context harmful spirits are not regarded to be permanently evil. Deities and spirits considered demonic in one case may become positive agents whose possession is requested in order to communicate with the invisible world. Equally, people affected by these agencies may experience both voluntary and involuntary possession.

Specialists

A diversity of religious figures and ritual expressions dealing with possession exist in Japan. Scholars have often placed these practices under the rubric of shamanism, but it is more appropriate to speak of "specialists of oracular possession." Oracular possession is performed at the request of consultants or believers. Women are more firequently encountered in this role. They are designated by different vernacular terms, often according to their geographical areas of action. The only generic term used throughout the country by the practitioners themselves and their clients, and recorded in historical sources, is *miko* (a term that today is mistakenly associated only with Shinto shrine female attendants). *Miko* (also read *fujo*) were active since the eighth century, well integrated into the religious and institutional life of the great temple and shrine complexes, and some had quite high status. They

mostly engaged in the transmission of oracles (*takusen*) from Shinto gods and Buddhist bodhisattvas, thought to occur through divine possession, but at times they also played a role as healers and exorcists. *Miko* used bells and small drums for their rites and often performed a dance called *kagura*. This dance, used by a number of specialists of possession, is a ritual meant to facilitate the descent of the gods into a medium's body, and it becomes in itself the expression of possession.

Female specialists in the northern areas of Japan are called *itako*. They are blind or semi-blind women, blindness being perceived as a condition conducive to communication with the world of the spirits. They specialize in channeling the spirits of the dead (*kuchiyose*, literally, to call by mouth). The *itako* chants a formalized narrative, derived from local oral tradition, to introduce her messages. She rubs a long rosary in her hands, derived from the Buddhist rosary but adorned with animal fangs, claws, and horns, and recites sutras and invocations to ask the dead to descend. When the deceased "descends," the *itako*'s language switches into a more comprehensible dialogue between the deceased and the client. The voice of the *itako* does not change, nor does she double the voice of the deceased person, but she starts speaking in the first person to recount the current situation of the deceased in the afterlife and finally gives personal predictions and recommendations to the living.

Traditionally *itako* performed their services in village homes and gathered at temples and shrines during specific festivals. Today they are most conspicuously seen on Mount Osore on the northernmost tip of Honshū during the celebrations for the dead that take place in July (the sixth month of the lunar calendar). Their tents line up outside the precincts of the Buddhist temple of the area (a Zen temple). Their clients often travel long distances from all over Japan and queue for hours under the scorching sun to hear from and speak to their dead. Thus the *itako* are acknowledged by the Buddhist establishment, although they are not part of it and are no longer practicing within the precincts of the temple.

To the opposite geographical spectrum are the female religious specialists of Okinawa, in particular those called *yuta*. These figures operate in a distinct socio-religious system where the religious sphere is completely the domain of women, in their capacity as both priestesses and oracular specialists. These two roles are often seen in competition with each other and occupying different hierarchical positions. A *yuta* experiences a "divine illness" through

which she is able to identify the deity who legitimizes her power and whom she will worship as her tutelary *kami*. *Yuta* undergo possession in order to channel the spirits of different types of ancestors or to provide predictions on any aspect of life to their clients. These possessions are reported to be particularly painful. They also wield exorcistic powers.

Specialists of oracular possession from Kyoto and Osaka, in central Japan, called *dai*, are also predominately female. These are mainly urban figures, but sacred mountains in the region, such as Mt. Ikoma or Fushimi, dedicated to Inari, the ubiquitous god of harvest, wealth, and business whose messenger is a fox, occupy an important role in their activities. The French anthropologist Anne Bouchy has given a vivid account of the life of one such specialist, active in Osaka between the 1920s and the 1980s. A woman affected by blindness, she partially recovered her sight when a god possessed her. The god that possessed her, called Shirataka, is described as a white fox (but one time taking the shape of a snake that came out of her blind eye). Its oracles were powerful and enabled people to find what they were looking for and to be cured of fatal illnesses. At times the deity would descend not only into the *dai*, but also into the people around her, causing a collective possession: the earth and the building would tremble, and everyone would begin dancing.

It is important to note that while the possession that some oracular specialists, the *itako* for instance, experience may be deemed to be voluntary, all these figures also undergo an initiatory possession, which is unintentional and often unexpected. This possession marks the beginning of their life as religious specialists. In the case of the *itako*, it occurs at the end of a period of training in which the *itako* learn the necessary ritual knowledge to enact the communication with the dead. It is a ritual possession witnessed by elder *itako*, who facilitate it by chanting and singing. The deity that takes possession of the new *itako* will become her protective deity and her spouse. Other oracular specialists recount having first experienced the deity descend into their body in a dream or during the performance of ascetic practices. The *dai* of Osaka studied by Bouchy was possessed for the first time by her protector god while practicing under a waterfall.

Another important group of specialists of oracular possession are the practitioners of the Ontake cult (*Ontake gyōja*). Predominantly male figures, they belong to confraternities (*kō*) dedicated to the deities of Mount Ontake, a sacred mountain in central Japan. The spirits who dwell on the mountain and

who take possession of the medium are of different status: deceased devotees (the confraternity members), previous mediums who have been deified and acquired the status of spiritual beings (*reijin*), and the gods of the mountain. Memorial stones to the deceased dot the path to the summit of the mountain. They serve as the abode of the spirits (*yorishiro*) and in front of these stones the spirits are summoned during the séance. Possession takes place on the mountain, where the groups go in pilgrimages, and occurs multiple times while the groups ascend the mountain. The séance, called *oza*, consists of two practitioners sitting or standing face to face. One of them, called *nakaza* or "between seat," acts as the medium. The other, called *maeza* or "front seat," performs specific mudras (*kuji*, see below) and utters mantras of Buddhist deities and other spells to facilitate the medium's trance. The ritual follows a pattern similar to the one found in other rituals of possession and exorcism: the *maeza* summons the deity into the medium's body, asks his identity, questions him, and, after receiving its oracles, sends it away. The moment in which the deity descends in his body is marked by a change in the physiognomy of the medium and his convulsively dashing and flailing of a wand, made of white stripes of paper, which he holds in his hands. When possession is very powerful (because of the status of the deity and of the disposition and ability of the medium to receive it), the medium leaps up and down from a cross-legged position on the floor. The role of the *nakaza* and *maeza* are at times exchangeable. The *maeza* usually also fulfills the duty of guiding the confraternity on the mountain. Today there are different confraternities ascending the mountain from different paths, and each has a slightly different style of performance of possession.

Exorcism

Perhaps more than oracular specialists such as *miko* and *dai*, Buddhist monks, yin-yang masters (*onmyōji*), and mountain ascetics called *yamabushi* were historically regarded as skilled exorcists (*kitōshi*). Their services were requested, often conjunctly, by the court and aristocracy, and by common people. Court diaries and classic literary sources as well as gazetteers and popular tales abound with accounts of Buddhist monks reciting sutras and dharanis next to yin-yang masters performing other rituals, for instance, in order to expel resilient spirits from the body of women giving birth. Buddhism introduced to Japan scriptural sources and healing rituals that supplied effective remedies not only against karmic diseases, but also against

any form of affliction caused by a spiritual agency. The spread of esoteric (i.e., Tantric) Buddhism in particular influenced the modality and the language of exorcistic practice, and crucial elements originated in esoteric Buddhism have continued to be employed by practitioners, affiliated with or independent from Buddhist institutions, up to today.

Exorcism (*yorigitō* or *kitō*) relies on the spiritual power achieved by the performers through their practices, as well as the power of the sacred words, scriptures or dharani, and of the gods and Buddhas that are invoked during the ritual. In esoteric Buddhism the notion of *kaji kitō* implies that an initiated priest can channel into a patient the energy of the Buddha that he has acquired in his own practice and that empowers him (*kaji*, Sanskrit *adhiṣṭhāna*). In this way hand gestures, mantra recitation, and visualization, namely the ritual tools of esoteric Buddhism, become an invocation (*kitō*) used as healing technique.

Exorcisms vary according to the purpose of the rite or the nature of the spirit concerned. For instance, the ritual manuals transmitted within Nichiren Buddhism divide exorcisms into five categories (*himyō godan*), according to the possessing spirit:

1. Spirits of the dead (*shiryō*). These spirits are considered easy to detect, but the rite to exorcise them may last for a long time (manuals prescribe 17 days).

2. Living spirits (*ikiryō*). These are human beings who become vengeful spirits while still alive and send curses to other living beings. Their exorcism lasts seven days.

3. Foxes (*yako*). This category comprises all animal spirits.

4. Spirits who cause plagues. Their exorcism is performed for five days.

5. Curses (*juso*). Exorcism serves to return the curse or to extinguish the curse.

Remedies offered for each type of exorcism depend on the ritual lineage of the *kitoshi* and may include the recitation of sutra passages and incantations and the bestowal of protective talismans (*ofuda*) as well as swallowing the talismans with empowered water. The ritual pattern is quite standard and consists of a limited set of ritual actions: to make contact with the worlds of

spirits, summon them, and force the spirit through incantations to leave the body of the possessed patient. The exorcism may be conducted directly on the patient, or a medium may be used, in which case the spirit is forced to enter the body of the medium. The first step of the procedure is diagnostic: the exorcist needs to identify the cause of the illness or difficulties of the patient, and what kind of spirit possesses the patient. The spirit is forced to name itself, to explain its motives, and eventually to agree to terms that denote his submission.

Mount Yoshino Midnight-Moon. The court lady, Iga-notsubone, confronts the ghost of Kiyotaka. Kiyotaka gave the emperor disastrous advice that led to their defeat at the battle of Minatogawa in 1336. His spirit refused to rest and terrorized the court until confronted by Lady Iga, who went to meet him with a lantern of firefies. (Asian Art & Archaeology, Inc./Corbis)

One of the most common ritual means to manipulate possessing agencies is the so-called *kuji-kiri*, literally "cutting the nine characters," a practice of Daoist origin, early on adopted by Chinese Buddhism and transmitted to Japan through Buddhist sources and today used by a range of specialists. Practitioners utter the sound of nine characters, making stabbing motions in the air with a ritual implement (a *vajra*, for instance) to shape mudras, four

vertical and five horizontal, in order to form a gate through which evil may not pass. This is accompanied by sharp yells of the first and last syllables of the Sanskrit alphabet (*a* and *un* in the Japanese pronunciation). The invocations may vary according to the affiliation of the practitioners. Nichiren Buddhism priests, for instance, use the title of the Lotus Sutra, and while performing *kuji* recite phrases of this scripture promising that the devotee will not suffer illness. Instead of a vajra, they hold in their hand a ritual implement called *bokken*, consisting of a rosary attached to a wooden tablet, which works like clackers. The specific *kuji* patterns drawn in the air also differ according to the purpose of the ritual. These practices were inherited and adapted by new religious groups derived from Nichiren Buddhism.

One feature shared by all the specialists involved with possession and the management of possession is ascetic training. Ascetic practices are seen as necessary to purify and empower the persons who have to deal with spirits. The most common practice consists of cold water ablutions, often performed standing under a waterfall in summer and winter, half naked or covered by just a white loincloth. This is combined with learning the recitation of sacred words, Buddhist sutras, and other sacred chants. The exorcism masters of Nichiren Buddhism undergo particularly hard training, consisting of a hundred days of collective practice secluded in a temple hall, today the Nakayama Hokekyōji in Chiba, east of Tokyo, where deprivation of food and sleep is combined with the continuous recitation of the Lotus Sutra in a very loud voice and repeated cold water ablutions. During this training they are transmitted the secret arts of exorcism and the tools to perform it.

Lucia Dolce

See also: Buddhism; China; Daoism; Japanese New Religious Movements; Kagura; Miko; Shamanism;

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JAPANESE NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

The vast majority of Japanese new religious movements (NRMs) formed in the middle of the 20th century, just after World War II when State Shinto was abolished. Emerging in tandem with the reconstruction of war-torn Japan and the influx of Western cultural ideas, the breadth of these movements and the formation of their faith-based doctrines were characterized by a multitude of innovative beliefs and practices in which spiritual possession became commonplace. Spiritual possession among NRMs in Japan take on at least three forms: (1) trance states that produce other-worldly messages, (2) claims of being an “incarnation” of gods or spirits, and (3) channeling, in which mediums claim to have supernatural communication with celestial beings, spirits of the dead, and even famous living people.

Instances of trance states can be found in a number of Japanese NRMs. Founder of God’s Light Association (GLA), Shinji Takahashi (1927–1976) was particularly well known for delivering various sermons in trance states during which he was said to receive spiritual messages from celestial figures, most notably Jesus Christ and Moses. Claims of being an incarnation of a god or spirit are also common among Japanese NRMs. Although there are countless leaders and laymen that report having such abilities, Kensuke Matsui (d. 2002), founder of the *Kigenkai* NRM established much of his career as the “Great Deity,” claiming to have been the reincarnation of *Yamato-takeru-no-mikoto*, the famous prince of the Yamato Dynasty. The combination of the historical accounts of this legendary prince and Matsui’s claims of the power to heal and perform exorcisms helped him to garner a substantial following. Before Matsui’s death, he was said to have conferred another incarnation on one of his daughters, making her the “Second Messiah.”

Communing with gods and spirits as mediums is also common among Japanese NRMs. The late leader of the Pana-Wave Laboratory, Yuko Chino (1934–2006), gave prophecies of impending disasters, which she was allegedly warned about through communication with a variety of gods and

spirits of the dead. Operating reclusively out of her Toyota van, Chino channeled thousands of individuals, often broadcasting her conversations through amplifiers to her following. Chino's spirit contacts included Zeus, the Archangel Michael, Jesus Christ, Thor, Audrey Hepburn, and Pope John Paul II.

Finally, some Japanese new religious movements incorporate all three of these forms of spiritual possession. For example, Ryuho Okawa (b. 1956), founder of the *Happy Science* (*Kōfuku-no-Kagaku*) new religious movement and its political branch, the *Happiness Realization Party,* is said to frequently fall into trance states where he loses consciousness as Okawa and then receives spiritual messages from others. Okawa has reportedly communed with an extensive list of mythical, philosophical, and religious figures such as Zeus, Socrates, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Muhammad. Additionally, Okawa has also written about his spiritual communications with such unlikely figures as Mozart, Sir Isaac Newton, Shakespeare, Helen Keller, Thomas Edison, Mahatma Gandhi, Newt Gingrich, Mitt Romney, and the guardian angels of the late Kim Jong II of North Korea and Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra of Thailand. Several of these communications in which Okawa acts as the mouthpiece for these figures are transcribed and featured on the Happy Science Facebook site.

Many of Okawa's writings also state that he has undergone several incarnations. He claims to be the current incarnation of a being called "Lord El Cantare," who is the supreme God of all terrestrial deities throughout history. As such, Okawa has lived many previous lives as "brother souls," including La Mu, of the mythical continent of Mu, Thoth of Atlantis, Rient Arl Croud of the Inca Empire, Ophealis and Hermes of Greece, and Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha. Okawa also identifies others as powerful incarnations. Most notably Okawa's ex-wife, Kyoko, a one-time seminal figure of the church and political party, proclaimed herself the reincarnation of Aphrodite.

Salvador Jimenez Murguia

See also: Channeling; Japan

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JINN

Jinn (also spelled “djinn”) is an Arabic word for a type of spirit, literally meaning “invisible” or “hidden from sight.” In Islamic tradition, Allah created the *jinn* from smokeless fire before creating human beings from clay. Like people, *jinn* have free will and can be either good or evil. In Islam, the devil, known as *Iblis*, is not a fallen angel but a *jinn* who is jealous of God’s love for human beings. *Jinn* can possess human bodies and control them, but they can also be controlled, as in the classic story of Aladdin’s lamp. Stories of *jinn* spread alongside Islam throughout Asia and North Africa and belief in *jinn* is still common in many parts of the world.

In Islamic folklore, *jinn* are often described as having their own society where they eat, love, marry, and die like human beings. Being made of fire, they are invisible but can appear however they wish. When they want to be seen, *jinn* have been said to appear as clouds of vapor, dogs, snakes, camels, donkeys, dragons, or people. *Jinn* are thought to live in lonely or impure place such as deserts, ruins, graveyards, and even latrines. Many misfortunes are attributed to *jinn* including accidents, illness, and insanity. However, Surah 72 of Qur’an (called Surat al-Jinn or “Surah of the Jinn”) explains that some *jinn* have heard the teachings of Muhammad and converted to Islam.

The Qur’an mentions three different types of *jinn*. The *ghul* is mischievous and associated with graveyards. *Ghuls* are shape-shifters, cannibals, and blood-drinkers. They steal corpses from graves, carry away children, and attack unprotected travelers. These creatures appear in the collection of stories known as *One Thousand and One Nights*. *Sila* are the most clever type of *jinn*. They take many forms and often disguise themselves as humans. Finally the *ifrit* (literally, powerful ones) are a

particularly powerful and malevolent form of *jinn*. In Surah 27, an ifrit offers to bring King Solomon the throne of the king of Sheba. However, Solomon wisely accepts the prayers of a pious person instead of the help of the *ifrit*. Outside of the Qur'an, other traditions of *jinn* developed throughout the Islamic world. For instance, in *One Thousand and One Nights*, the *marid* is described as a powerful type of *jinn* that lives in the sea.

Aladdin visited by the jinn of the lamp. From a French edition of *Arabian Nights*. (Universal History Archive/UIG via Getty Images)

Whether good or evil, *jinn* can influence human beings in a number of ways. They may whisper into people's ears, urging them to do righteous or sinful actions. They can also possess people directly. Possession by an evil *jinn* is believed to cause madness and requires an exorcism. However, in some cultures, such as the Gnawa of Morocco, *jinn* possession can be positive. The Gnawa honor seven families of *jinn* that can be invoked in ceremonies using special songs and dances. During these ceremonies, dancers enter a trance during which they believe the *jinn* gives them powers to heal the sick.

Frank Jacob

See also: Deaths Resulting from Exorcism; Islam; Morocco; Pakistan

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JOHNSON, ARNE CHEYENNE

In October 1981 a Connecticut court considered the case of Arne Cheyenne Johnson, charged with the murder of his landlord. This case was unique in American jurisprudence in that the attorney for the accused entered a plea of not guilty by virtue of demonic possession. This is one of many high profile cases connected to the careers of demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren.

The "Demon Murder Trial" does not begin with Johnson, but instead with a young boy then 11 years old named David, son of Debbie Glatzel, of Brookfield, Connecticut. She claimed that in July 1980 David was awakened at night by a beast with pointed ears and hooves. The creature told David to beware. The family contacted St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Brookfield, and they performed a blessing, but there was no relief from the manifestations. The appearances escalated and took place day and night, with the beast taking different forms. Concerned that the experiences were continuing, a priest from St. Joseph's contacted demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren and asked them to investigate. The Warrens claimed that they saw David exhibit strange behavior, including fits, shaking, levitation, and the uttering of obscenities. Lorraine said she saw a dark form near the boy and that red marks appeared on his body as a result of these encounters. For the Warrens these manifestations were confirmation of demonic possession.

Arney Johnson, fiancé of Debbie Glatzel, was concerned about the boy. Johnson, then 19, sought to alleviate his suffering. He decided to taunt the possessing entity and challenged it to enter him. Later Johnson was said to have undergone a personality change as a result of the encounter, and he claimed that he saw David's beast as well. Glatzel said that Johnson experienced trances and suffered memory losses. Later Johnson got into a

heated exchange with his landlord, Alan Bono. Bono died as a result of the altercation from a series of stab wounds. Johnson was arrested a couple of miles from the crime scene and charged with murder. He claimed that he did not recall the incident.

In light of Johnson's claims of possession, and the opinions of the Warrens that Johnson was possessed at the time of the murder, Johnson's attorney, Martin Minella, decided to claim that his client was not guilty as a result of demonic possession. Minella was aware that similar defenses had been made on two previous occasions in British courts. Johnson's trial took place in Connecticut Superior Court in October 1981, and after three days of deliberation the jury convicted him of first-degree manslaughter. He received a 20-year sentence and served 5 years before being released.

This case was made into a book titled *The Devil in Connecticut*, by Gerald Brittle and a television movie, *The Demon Murder Case*, that aired on NBC in 1983. In 2006 brothers Carl Glatzel and David Glatzel Jr. sued Lorraine and Brittle for invasion of privacy, libel, and affliction of emotional distress for what they say are false claims made in the book.

John W. Morehead

See also: Taylor, Michael; Warren, Ed and Lorraine

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JUDAISM

The 3,000-year-old religious communities, texts, and practices known collectively as "Judaism" include an elaborate and diverse set of traditions regarding possession, both malevolent and beneficent, as well as the therapeutic exorcism of malevolent entities, whether they be demonic or spirits of the dead. The roots of these traditions go back to the Hebrew Bible, which understands human bodies to be permeable to outside spiritual forces, starting with the animating spirit of God (Gen. 1:6). Other divine forces, such as the "divine spirit of wisdom" (Ex. 31) and prophecy (Num. 11), could

enter a person, either temporarily (1 Sam. 10) or permanently (Num. 27).

The first allusion to possession by an evil spirit and its exorcism appears in the youth narratives of David (1 Sam. 16). People who fell under the influence of false prophets and mediums may also have required the exorcism of possessing evil spirits (Zech. 13). In the Roman Period, Josephus identified possessing demons as the spirits of the malevolent dead (Wars 7:6, 3).

Over time Jews developed a complex taxonomy of possession, with three general categories emerging out of the biblical antecedents: demonic possession; beneficent spiritual (often termed an *ibbur* or *maggid*) possession, usually manifested through xenoglossia or automatic writing; and malevolent spiritual possession, usually called a *ruach ra* or a *dybbuk*, marked by dramatic anti-social, debilitating behavior, and sometimes, xenoglossia.

The earliest post-Biblical accounts also fail to make a clear distinction between demonic attack and demonic possession, so the sources from classical Antiquity that describe driving away demons do not specify whether the spirit is actually physically in control of the victim. The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), for example, include several exorcism incantations and formulas, mostly directed against disease-causing demons. The DSS Psalms collection in particular (11Q5) has “four songs for the charming of demons with music,” but without any contextual information as to how they were used.

Josephus, as mentioned earlier, recounts incidents of possession and exorcism in his Antiquities of the Jews (2, 5, 8, 45–48). In his description, exorcism involved burning herbs and immersing the possessed person in water. The New Testament also reports Jesus to have performed numerous exorcisms of demonic spirits in first-century Palestine (Matthew 12; Mark 5, 6, 13; Luke 8), providing the most detailed reports of malevolent possession in a Jewish milieu during the Roman era. By contrast, the issues of possession and exorcism did not seem to be much of a concern to the earliest Rabbinic authorities (spanning 200 CE–1100CE). The vast corpus of Rabbinic literature offers only the sparsest references to the problem of possession and its treatment.

Thus, there is no fully preserved ritual or liturgy for a demonic exorcism of an individual from antiquity. Yet, there is good evidence outside Jewish canonical literature in the form of Hebrew and Aramaic amulets that concerns about demonic attack were present among the general population. Perhaps the

most intriguing source for what an early exorcism might have looked like can be found in the texts that appear on incantation bowls. The function of these bowls could vary. Many were evidently apotropaic—they were meant to be preventative protection against spiritual attack of a home and its inhabitants. We can see this from the wording, which often invokes a "shotgun-like" protection against every conceivable demon, spirit, illness, warlock, witch, curse, and/or evil eye. On the other hand, some were clearly formulated to drive out a demonic force already present in the home or an individual.

Rabbinic literature of late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages does include a few reports of exorcisms, though at times in a tongue-in-cheek manner (*Pesikta de-Rav Kahanah* 1:4, *Numbers Rabbah* 19.8). An extended story in *Leviticus Rabbah* 24:3 recounts the exorcism of a well of water involving iron implements and shouted formulas. In a more playful vein, the Talmudic Sage Shimon bar Yohai exorcises a demon that assists him in getting the cooperation of Caesar in lifting an oppressive decree against the Jews (T.B., *Yoma* 57a). In a medieval Midrash, the charismatic healer Hanina ben Dosa is credited with exorcising an evil spirit haunting an old woman. Intriguingly, in the last two accounts, the Sages exorcise demons, even though in the context of the narratives, the spirits actually behaved in a beneficial fashion. By the later Middle Ages, whole texts dedicated to understanding and combating demons started to appear. By the early modern era, something resembling a set of conventions for performing exorcisms are recorded, though to this day Judaism has not developed a canonical liturgy for exorcism as, for example, is found in the Roman Catholic tradition.

As medieval Jews developed more elaborate theories of the soul, including a doctrine of transmigration of souls from one body to another, and these beliefs gain influence, so too does a preoccupation with possession by the dead come to overshadow earlier traditions of demonic possession. The transmigration of souls, benign and evil spirit possession, all are mentioned in the 13th-century *Sefer Zohar*, and by the 16th century, eyewitness accounts of possessions and exorcisms rapidly proliferate. Quite a number of notable Jewish figures from this time forward into the modern era fill the role of exorcist, including Isaac Luria, Chayyim Vital, Isaiah Horowitz and the Chofetz Chayyim.

Benign spirit possessions were widely reported and widely accepted at the dawn of the modern era. Benevolent possessing entities included angels, the spirits of deceased saints, and more abstract forces regarded as attributes

of the Divine, such as “Torah,” “Wisdom,” and the Shekhinah. No less a figure than Joseph Karo, the 16th-century author of the authoritative digest of Jewish law, the *Shulchan Aruch*, experienced regular periods of being seized by a *maggid* that spoke through him and identified itself as the “spirit of the Mishna.” Karo, like many others, actively sought to induce these possessions by a variety of meditative and ecstatic practices.

Malign spirit exorcism in Judaism in most respects resemble demonic exorcism in surrounding Christian and Islamic cultures. Key to any Jewish exorcism is having an acknowledged pious man (they were all men), either a formally recognized rabbi or a charismatic individual (usually designated with an honorific: *abba, baal shem, rebbe*) conduct the ceremony. This is in contrast with Mesopotamian and Greco-Roman practices, which conventionally used a physician.

According to metaphysics of the 16th-century mystic Isaac Luria, exorcism of a possessing *dybbuk* involves the *tikkun*, or “repair” of the ghostly soul. The exorcist accomplishes this by directing the spirit toward salvation, extracting its soul “sparks” and restoring them to the *Adam Kadmon* or *guf*, the macrocosmic root soul, until the estranged evil consciousness withers and is annihilated. Thus the exorcist is acting on behalf of both the victim and the *dybbuk*.

The process usually starts with the exorcist ritually purifying himself, either according to traditional Jewish practice, or by special means, such as anointing himself with water and oil. Some later exorcists may invoke the presence of a *maggid*, or beneficent spirit, to assist them. Many exorcisms were public events, either performed in a synagogue, or at least requiring the presence of a *minyan*, a minimum of ten men that normally makes up a ritual quorum. Various somatic symptoms (swellings, paralysis, markings, and bodily sensations) were sought in the victim for diagnostic purposes. Most techniques include interviewing the demon and/or *dybbuk*, taking a personal history, as it were, in order to understand what is motivating the spirit and so better effect its removal.

Possessing spirits were quite forthcoming and loquacious. At times cooperation was coerced from the demon by “fumigation,” exposing it to smoke and sulfur, a sympathetic invocation of the infernal realms. The goal of the interview is to eventually learn the name of the evil spirit, giving the exorcist authority over the entity, a convention that is based in Greco-Roman traditions and in pseudepigraphic texts such as *The Testament of Solomon*.

The exorcist then uses the power of the demonic spirit's own name to "overpower" it, by round after round of scripted ritual actions involving threats and rebukes or increasing intensity and invasiveness. One exorcism on record reached the point of actually "beating" the demon out, but other reports simply involved verbal coercion.

Jewish exorcisms are usually "liturgical," using protective passages from the Psalms and other sacred texts, with Psalms 10, 91, and 127 particularly being lauded for their power against evil spirits. *Sefer ha-Gilgulim*, by Hayyim Vital, instructs the patient to recite Psalms 20, 91, and *Ana B'koah*, an acrostic prayer made from a name of God. Rituals accompanying the recitations can include sounding a shofar or the use of other Jewish objects, such as candles, Torah scrolls, *kvittles* (written requests for spiritual guidance, healing, or miraculous intervention, sent to a Hasidic master), *tefillin* (phylacteries), or lamps. Some exorcisms include the use of amulets.

The primary sign of a successful exorcism was a bloody fingernail or toenail, the point by which the *dybbuk* enters and leaves the body. Occasionally there are reports of spirits violently leaving through the throat, vagina, or rectum. A sudden and dramatic change in the victim's behavior is also a sure sign of recovery.

In a related tradition of soul transmigration, it is believed righteous individuals have the power to gather up unmoored souls who are trapped in this world and release them so they may continue their journey into the afterlife. Celebrated figures such as the Baal Shem Tov, Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav, and Rabbi Hayyim ben Attar were noted for doing this.

Contemporary reports of exorcisms continue to come out of traditional communities both in the United States and Israel, though there has been a marked decline in the number over the past century, as modernity has penetrated into even the most insular Jewish subcultures. Belief in possession and the practice of exorcism has become so rare that most contemporary Jews are unaware that such traditions even exist in Judaism, despite the fact that Jewish possession has been a recurrent topic in popular culture, starting with the S. Ansky play and movie *The Dybbuk* over a century ago.

Geoffrey W. Dennis

See also: Automatic Writing; Ba'al Shem Tov; Dybbuk; Ibbur; Incantation Bowl; New Testament; Rûaḥ; Xenoglossy

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Related Primary Documents from Jewish Tradition (Jewish, Eighth to 17th Centuries)

Judaism is an interpretive tradition, and it assumes all things real will find confirmation in scripture, however obliquely. Therefore these passages cite and use passages from the Hebrew Bible to both validate and frame the contours of Jewish beliefs about possession. Support for the belief that angelic and evil spirits can possess people appears as early as the Bible. The first text here uses this belief to both explain why one of God's creatures, the serpent, would and could rebel against God, but also as a proof text to argue mitigating circumstances regarding the moral culpability of a possessed person. Jewish traditions of "pneumatic possession" or possession by the dead souls of others, develops out of an emerging medieval doctrine of soul transmigration. The second passage is one of the earliest arguments in Jewish literature meant to demonstrate transmigration is taught in Scriptures. The third passage belongs to a genre of possession and exorcism reports that were collected and published at the dawn of the modern era.

1. The Serpent was Like a Man Possessed—*Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer*, Eighth Century

"Envy, lust, and ambition drive man from the world" …. Samael was the great Prince in heaven [at the time of creation] … and he saw all the creatures that the Blessed Holy created and he could not find in them all one so suited to cause woe as the serpent … so he [Samael] mounted him and rode him … A parable: to what is this matter to be compared? To a man who has in him an evil spirit; and all the actions he took, he would take of his own accord?

And all the words, he would speak of his own accord? Does he not act only according to the mind of the evil spirit that is upon him? So too, all the actions that the serpent would take, and all the words he would speak, he did not speak except by the mind of Samael.

2. Souls migrate from body to body—*Sefer Bahir*, 13th Century

Truly, God does all these things two or three times to a man: To return his soul from the grave that he may bask in the light of the living (Job 33:29-30)

What is [the meaning of] Generation to Generation (Psalm 164:10)? Rabbi Papias said, A generation goes and a generation comes (Ecclesiastes 1:4). Rabbi Akiba said, a generation came that already came.

A parable. To what can this be compared? To a king who had servants and as much as he could he dressed them in garments of silk and embroidery. The grain spoiled. So he pushed them from him and sent them away. He took their garments, so they left them. [The king] took the garments and cleaned them well until not a stain remained. He placed them near Him for an appointed time. He acquired other servants, and dressed them in the same garments. Though he did not know if they were any good [either], they were worthy of garments that already existed and had been worn by others before them.

… but the earth stands forever. And this is as what is written [elsewhere], the dust returns to the earth as it was. but the spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:6).

3. Exorcism account—*Nishmat Hayyim*, Book 3, section 10, 17th century.

Demonstrating the subject of how the spirits from people already dead enter the bodies of the living [this] being definitive proof, about which there is no doubt, for the endurance of the soul … also in the year 5337 [1557 CE] … it was recounted in the city of Ferrara there was a Jewish woman who fainted and a voice came forth from her throat, though her lips did not move, and the voice spoke. When asked, “Who are you?” he responded, “I am the Christian so-and-so, I dwelt in so-and-so-place.” And he was giving all his proofs [of his identity] until all listening who were familiar with that Christian, who had died at an earlier time. They asked how he entered the woman’s body, and he responded, “Thus-and-thus he entered such a place” …. Rabbi Gedaliah ben Yehiya testified …” I found her laid on her back in her bed, like a body

without a soul; her eyes were shut and her mouth was open and her tongue was swollen from the lip beyond. The men and women ministering to her said this was because the spirit was to be found in her tongue … after I argued with the spirit and pleaded exceedingly before him that he should answer my questions, he responded in a clear, easily understood Italian that his name was Battista deModena, and he was forcibly hanged for the thefts he committed. He began to make a wailing sound and groan. I soothed him with goodly words and he was comforted … I asked who put him there [in the body]. He responded "I do not know." I asked him to come forth. He responded, "I am unable." [The account reveals more about the *dybbuk* and the symptoms of the possession, but does not give the details of the subsequent exorcism. Instead, the author concludes] The souls of [other] persons who were executed and hanged entered bodies of people, but through incantations, fumigation, and like means applied to places of the body, revealed their names, matters concerning themselves, all their acts, the places they dwelt, and the sins for which they entered bodies and going hither and yon … they exorcised them from the bodies.

Introduction and translation by Geoffrey W. Dennis

KAGURA

Meaning "entertainment for *kami* (indigenous Japanese gods or spirits)," *kagura* is a theatrical dance that accompanies Shinto rites and initially resulted in spirit possession in pre-modern Japan. According to government officials, *kagura* dances have been performed at the Imperial Sanctuary of the Japanese ruling family for over 1,000 years in accordance with Imperial Harvest festivities. Shrine attendants called *miko* generally perform the *kagura* dance, and are said to imitate the ecstatic dances performed by the goddess Ame-no-Uzume to lure the Japanese Sun Goddess Amateratsu from her cave. The dance features several elements associated with traditional Japanese shamanism, including the construction of a sacred enclosure, elaborate costumes to encourage spirit possession, and drum and flute music to summon the deity. *Kagura* was meant not only to lure *kami* into the performer's body but also as an expression of possession by the gods themselves.

By the 11th and 12th centuries, *kagura* had developed into a set of highly ritualized dances that told a specific narrative and generally involved little to no spirit possession. Nōh—the highly stylized form of Japanese theatre—likely developed out of these narrativized *kagura* performances, which featured slow, trance-like movements. *Kagura* dances as Shinto rituals fell into social disfavor during the 19th century when the Meiji government attempted to eradicate what they regarded as subversive folk beliefs from Japanese society. However, *kagura* has recently reemerged as a living tradition of indigenous Japanese storytelling and theatre.

Natasha L. Mikles

See also: Japan; Miko; Storytelling and Possession

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An artist performs a traditional *kagura* dance dedicated to the Sumiyoshi Shrine in Tokyo, 2014. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

KARDECISM

Kardecism is a Brazilian transplant of 19th-century French Spiritism. Its mediums are believed to communicate with spirits of the dead. Spiritism is important at a global level: the International Spiritist Council has 36 member countries. Brazilian Kardecism has developed more explicitly religious dimensions than its French counterpart (emphasizing therapeutic techniques and belief in spiritual evolution over many reincarnations). It is an important and growing religion: 3.8 million Brazilians (2 percent of the population) self-identified as members on the 2010 census; the Brazilian Spiritist Federation estimates that as many as 30 million Brazilians (many of them Catholics) regularly attend study sessions and rituals. Kardecist groups have been established in many countries, and prominent living mediums, like

Divaldo Franco (1927–), have growing international impact through books, lectures, and the Internet.

Following the rise of American Spiritualism, in the late 1840s, techniques of speaking to departed spirits spread quickly. The séance and "table-turning" vogue became a huge public phenomenon in France in 1853–1854. Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail (1804–1869) became interested and—writing as Allan Kardec—systematized French Spiritism in *The Book of the Spirits* (1857) and other works. Kardec drew on mesmerism (e.g., the manipulation of "magnetic fluids" to produce healing effects), Christianity (e.g., God as primary cause, Christ as the most elevated spirit ever to have incarnated, and charitable works as a standard of spiritual evolution), esoteric traditions (e.g., the doctrine of many worlds), and Asian religions (reincarnation). He considered Spiritism to be more science and philosophy than religion: he held that mediumistic communication with departed spirits is a natural and scientific phenomenon, reflecting the dual nature of reality, material/visible and spiritual/invisible. In light of this, the most common Kardecist ritual remains group study of classic Spiritist texts.

Spiritism arrived in Brazil in the 1860s. Given the literate transmission of Spiritist ideas, these early Kardecists were urban, upper-class, and well-educated. (Kardecism remains a primarily urban phenomenon with its members having the highest literacy and education rates of any religious group in Brazil.) Brazilian Kardecist books, periodicals, and organizations soon appeared. Kardecism grew dramatically from the 1940s on. The key middle-period figure, Chico Xavier (1910–2002) wrote over 450 books during extended sessions of automatic writing. His 1944 moralistic novel *Nosso Lar* (*Our Home*) is a landmark of Brazilian popular literature (the 2010 film version became the highest grossing Brazilian film of all time). Kardecist moralistic novels (written by spirits through sometimes best-selling mediums) remain a popular sub-genre of books on "spirituality."

Spirits manifest themselves primarily in three aspects of Kardecism. First, trained mediums work in closed sessions with more evolved spirits who (1) give advice to help in the spiritual evolution of those incarnate in the less evolved material realm or (2) bring specific messages from recently departed individuals. Dedicated mediums generally establish working relationships with specific spirits, including important mediums of previous generations, for example, doctor Bezerra de Menezes, known as the "the Brazilian Kardec" (1831–1900). Afro-descendent and indigenous spirits have generally

been considered relatively unevolved and are rarely worked with. Mediums do not consider themselves to be "possessed by" but rather to "work with" the spirits. They describe their state while doing this work as fully conscious, with a voluntary relaxation of the will that allows spirits to communicate verbally and through automatic writing.

Second, something closer to possession occurs in the case of "obsession." Kardecism does not believe in demons, that is, essentially evil spirits. However, unevolved spirits are believed to interfere with living individuals, through maliciousness, vengefulness, ignorance, or confusion. They send negative magnetic fluids with results that range from mild emotional disturbance (easily handled when the person affected has some training as a medium), through "fascination" (serious distortions of thought that are not recognized as caused by a spirit), to "subjugation" (in which the spirit deprives their victim of autonomy). The cure is "disobsession," which involves treating both the victim and the offending spirit, primarily helping the latter to understand that their negative actions are standing in the way of their own spiritual development.

Third, Kardecism informs a wide variety of spiritual healing practices in Brazil. This is visible in many new religious movements that draw on Kardecist ideas, ranging, for example, from Umbanda, through the Legião da Boa Vontade and Vale do Amanhecer, to Projectology. More specifically, Kardecist ideas influence the work of many spiritual healers in Brazil. For example, the medium José Arigó (1922–1971) grew world famous for psychic surgeries and other treatments performed by the spirit Dr. Fritz. Since Arigó's death, Dr. Fritz is believed to have continued his healing work through a series of other mediums.

Steven Engler

See also: Automatic Writing; Brazil; Spiritualism; Umbanda

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Related Primary Documents: Excerpts from Allan Kardec, *Le Livre des Esprits* (2nd ed., 1860) (French Spiritism, 19th Century)

Allan Kardec is the pen name of the French teacher Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail (1804–1869). Kardec worked to systemize Spiritism through his writings. His work The Book of the Spirits *(1857) consists primarily of answers that highly evolved disincarnate spirits were believed to have provided to a series of questions during séances. A selection of these questions and answers is presented here. In several of them, the spirits describe how they are able to exert influence over the living.*

97. Is there a specific number of orders or degrees of purification among the Spirits?

…[I]f we consider general characteristics, we may reduce them to three principal orders. In the first rank are those who have attained perfection, the "pure Spirits." Those of the second order have reached the middle of the ladder: the desire for good preoccupies them. Those of the last degree are still at the foot of the ladder: imperfect Spirits. They are characterized by ignorance, the desire for evil, and all the bad passions that delay their progress.

115. Among the Spirits, are some created good and others bad?

God created all Spirits in a state of simplicity and ignorance, that is, without knowledge. He gave them each a mission, with the goal of enlightening them, making them gradually achieve perfection through the knowledge of truth, and bringing them closer to Him. Eternal and unalloyed happiness lies, for them, in this perfection. Spirits acquire this knowledge by passing through the trials that God imposes on them. Some accept these trials with submission and arrive more quickly at their destiny's end. Others undergo them with murmuring and so remain, through their own fault, far from that promised perfection and happiness.

132. What is the purpose of the incarnation of the Spirits?

God imposes it on them with the goal of making them achieve perfection. For some, it is expiation, for others, a mission. But, to arrive at this perfection,

they must be subjected to all the vicissitudes of bodily existence: therein lies expiation.

149. What becomes of the soul at the instant of death?
It becomes again a Spirit. That is, it returns to the world of the Spirits, which it had left momentarily.

160. Does the Spirit immediately reencounter those that it knew on Earth and who are already dead?
Yes, according to the affection that it had for them and they for it. Often, they come to meet it on its return to the world of the Spirits, and they help to clear away the bonds of matter. It also reencounters many that it had lost to sight during its sojourn on the Earth. It sees those who are in error, and it goes to visit those who are incarnated.

167. What is the aim of reincarnation?
Expiation; progressive improvement of mankind. …

168. Is the number of bodily existences limited, or does a Spirit reincarnate forever?
In each new existence, the Spirit takes a step on the path of progress. When it has divested itself of all its impurities, it has no further need for the trials of bodily life.

558. Do the Spirits have anything else to do beyond improving themselves?
They conjoin with the harmony of the universe in carrying out the will of God, whose ministers they are. The Spirit-life involves continuous occupation, but with none of the hardships of the Earth, because there is neither bodily fatigue nor the anxieties of need.

567. Do the Spirits mingle with our occupations and with our pleasures?
Vulgar Spirits do. They are always around you and often take a very active part in all that you do, according to their nature. This is needed to push people along different paths of life, exciting or moderating their passions.

459. Do the Spirits influence our thoughts and actions?
Their influence is greater than you suppose; it is often they who direct you.

484. Do the Spirits favor certain people with their affections?
Good Spirits sympathize with good people, or those susceptible to improvement, and Inferior Spirits with those who are or may become bad.

The attachment follows from the similarity of sentiment.

489. Are there Spirits who attach themselves to an individual to protect them?
Yes, the spiritual brother, which you call “the good Spirit” or “the good genius.”

492. Is such a protector Spirit attached to an individual from birth?
From birth to death, often after death in the Spirit-life, and even over several successive bodily existences; for these existences are just short phases, as compared to the life of the Spirit.

473. Can a spirit temporarily assume the envelope of a living person, that is, introduce itself into an animate body, acting in place of the spirit incarnated there?
A Spirit does not enter a body as you enter a house. It assimilates itself with an incarnate Spirit that has the same defects and the same qualities, in order to act jointly. But it is always the incarnate Spirit that acts as it wills on the material with which it is clothed. No Spirit can take the place of another that is incarnated, because the Spirit and the body are linked during the period of material existence.

799. How can Spiritism contribute to progress?
By destroying materialism–which is one of society’s wounds–it helps people to understand their true interest. With the future life no longer veiled by doubt, people will understand better that the present can assure their future. By destroying the prejudices of sects, castes, and colors, it teaches people the great solidarity….

Introduction and translation by Steven Engler

KENYA

In Kenya, practitioners of indigenous religions, Muslims, and Christians have had a long history of interaction, which is reflected in their traditions of possession. Over the past five decades, anthropologists have brought different interpretive and analytical lenses to this phenomenon. F. B. Welbourn used Freudian psychology to understand spirit possession. His own case studies analyzed practitioners of indigenous religion and Christians in Western Kenya. The Iru people in the Nkore chiefdom believe in ambivalent spirits

called *cwezi*. These spirits are held responsible for illness, infertility, and other misfortunes. If, however, the spirits receive proper sacrifices, they will give aid and protection to their devotees. When a diviner diagnoses sickness as the wrath of a *cwezi*, the patient must sacrifice an animal to placate the spirit. In severe cases, however, the spirit demands that the patient enter into its cult. In the process of initiation into this cult, the patient is mocked, forced to do shameful acts, and then beaten for doing them. While the diviner/medium claims to be possessed by the spirit, the initiates of the cult are not; interestingly, however, they do feign spirit possession. Welbourn argues that the cult dances function to resolve tension in the unconscious. Children gain both satisfaction and frustration from their mother's breast, which becomes an object of both love and aggression (manifested in paranoid schizophrenia). The dances, in which the patient hates the spirit for harming him and loves the spirit for helping him, are a way of expressing and dealing with this tension.

Members of the East African Revival (Balokole) and African Pentecostals experience receiving the Holy Spirit. When possessed by the Spirit, people speak in tongues and enter cataleptic states. These Christians have strict moral codes and taboos surrounding food and sexuality. Public confession is also central to these groups. According to Welbourn, they are dealing with the "depressive position." Infants, who feel both love and aggression toward their mother's breast, come to feel guilty and depressed over the latter emotion. Thus, the cathartic outpouring and confessions among these Spirit-possessed Christians is a way of resolving this unconscious tension.

The work of I. M. Lewis has been extremely influential for the study of spirit possession along Kenya's Swahili coast. Based on his own research in Somalia, Lewis argued that people on the periphery of society use possession in order to gain access to society's center. Thus, the women in his study claimed to be possessed by male spirits in order to make demands of the patriarchal center of power. Since Lewis made this argument in 1966, scholars of the Swahili coast have been using, nuancing, and challenging this theory.

Roger Gomm tested Lewis's theory among the Digo people. Digo women have the same status as minors, and they are always under the authority of a man. Thus, they have fairly limited access to power. When women are possessed, generally by male spirits, they undergo exorcisms. During these rituals, they make their requests known, asking for clothing, money for bus

fares, furniture, radios, and new kitchen supplies. There are regular exorcisms on payday. While it seems to be a clear case of periphery gaining access to the center, Gomm asks why it is that people trust the women, pay the exorcists' steep fees, and give the spirits gifts. He argues that it is in a man's interest to support a woman's claim of possession. Digo men are expected to be in control of women, and thus when they cannot control a wife, daughter, and so on, they portray them as possessed. Possession also maintains the status quo, because women's possession mystifies their discontent.

Against Lewis, anthropologist Linda Giles emphatically claims that Swahili spirit possession is not a function of peripheral people seeking power but rather a central aspect of coastal Islamic belief and practice. The Muslim Swahili commonly believe in spirits called *jinni*, *sheitani*, and *pepo*. The words *jenni* and *sheitani* came to the Swahili Coast from the Middle East, testifying to the long trade in material and intellectual goods between those two regions. Yet the distinction between these spirits is of secondary importance to their religious and geographic origin. The Swahili make a distinction between Muslim and pagan spirits as well as a distinction between costal or inland spirits. Though not always, the two categories often coincide. The spirits take on the names of those various groups that have had some effect on Swahili history. Thus, one finds spirits named after various people groups—there are Arab (*Kiaribu*), Maasai (*Kimasai*), Somali (*Kisomali*), European (*Kizungu*), and many other kinds of spirits. Possession by these spirits gives voice to the Swahili coast's multi-ethnic past and also represents their present reality.

The Swahili understand possession as occurring in several ways. Spirits, who live on the seashore, in caves, rock outcroppings, or trees, can possess ("climb" or "mount") a passerby. They can also be inherited. Finally, witches use spirits to afflict their enemies. When possessing someone, the spirit makes itself known to its host through maladies, including sickness, infertility, or the death of a family member. There are two types of diviners (*waganga*) that diagnose and handle spirit possession: namely, the Qur'anic diviner (*mwalimu*) and the traditional diviner. Qur'anic diviners most often, though not always, exorcise spirits. Likewise, traditional diviners cast out those spirits that were sent by witches or seek to do the possessed harm. Yet there are certain circumstances in which Swahili understand possession to be helpful—spirits provide protection and healing powers. In those situations, the patient and the diviner entice the spirit to stay, offering it sacrifices,

incense, food, and dances in its honor. When the spirit possesses the initiate, she or he becomes a member of the cult of that particular spirit.

Contemporary interpretations of spirit possession try not to limit its function but recognize, rather, that the phenomenon has multiple, changing, and even contradictory meanings. Janet McIntosh follows this line to transcend Lewis's periphery/center binary. In her research on the Giriama, McIntosh comes to the conclusion that some individuals can embody hegemony in possession while at the same time critiquing it. The Giriama are a minority group on the Swahili coast. While they are not Muslims, their employers, patrons, and potential inlaws constantly entreat them to convert. Both Giriama women and men report being tormented and possessed by Muslim spirits. One of the main symptoms of possession by a Muslim spirit is that the possessed begins following Islamic dietary restrictions. Their appetites are suppressed during daylight hours of Ramadan. Likewise, if they eat bush rats or drink palm wine, foods prohibited by Islam, the possessed vomits. Rather than gaining access to power through these practices, the possessed engage in them reluctantly. One woman lamented that her conversion to Islam would be inevitable; a Muslim spirit was making her sick, and the only way to be cured of the illness was to convert. According to McIntosh, below the level of consciousness, the Giriama embrace dominant culture through practices of possession. As conscious agents, they lament their possession, thus criticizing the dominant culture.

Stephen Lloyd

See also: Gender; Islam; Pentecostalism; Psychological Interpretations; Sociological Interpretations

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KNIGHT, JZ

JZ Knight of Yelm, Washington, is considered to be one of the most well-known and successful “channels” in the United States. A channel is similar to a medium—a person who can communicate with a spiritual entity—but while a medium is still present in the body and acts as an intermediary between the spirit and its audience, a channel purportedly gives over his or her entire body to the visiting spirit. Channeling became widely popular at the height of the New Age movement in the 1970s and 1980s, and JZ Knight was one of the most prominent channeling figures at that time. Knight became famous by serving as the mouthpiece for the ancient warrior king-turned-philosopher Ramtha, a 35,000-year-old guru who has given lectures, interviews, and written books on personal fulfillment and spiritual enlightenment through Knight as his channel.

Judy “Zebra” Knight was born Judith Darlene Hampton on March 16, 1946, in Roswell, New Mexico. She came from a relatively poor family but eventually went to business school and later worked in sales for a cable television company. She then moved to the Seattle area and married Jeremy Wilder, a dentist with an interest in the fashionable occult currents of the 1970s. One morning in 1977 Knight was standing in her kitchen with her husband and playing around with one of her husband’s cardboard pyramids when a larger-than-life being of light appeared to her, and told her that he had come to help her achieve spiritual awakening. This was Ramtha, who was once the bloodthirsty conqueror of Atlantis, but over years of study and inner reflection discovered how to change the cells of the body to pure particles of light. In this way he overcame death and ascended bodily to the spiritual realm.

Channeler JZ Knight. (Photos 12/Alamy)

Over the next two years Knight practiced the process of physically channeling Ramtha so that he could use her as a vehicle for spreading his message of man's inner divinity. They began by giving small talks and lectures among a growing circle of listeners that included the actress Shirley MacLaine. MacLaine, who was already a sort of celebrity icon for spiritual seekers, mentioned her work with Ramtha in her 1985 book *Dancing in the Light*. This gave Knight and Ramtha's teachings wider exposure, and shortly thereafter hundreds and later thousands of seekers would flock to Knight's palatial ranch in Yelm, Washington, to learn at the foot of this newly discovered spiritual master.

The growing popularity of Ramtha's teachings led Knight to found the Ramtha School of Enlightenment (RSE) in 1988. The philosophical roots of Ramtha's teachings have often been compared to ancient gnostic traditions as well as to the human potential movement, which holds the general belief that man has within himself exponential power for growth and personal achievement. Based out of Knight's home in Yelm, the RSE holds special retreats and events that combine a series of lectures and activities designed to put into practice the techniques of visualization and inner concentration. A few of the methods the school uses to hone these talents include practicing archery while blindfolded, and sending mental messages to one another across long distances.

Some of these methods, as well as the RSE and JZ Knight herself, have

garnered negative media attention over the years. One of the most notable controversies for Knight was the 1992 court case over her divorce settlement with ex-husband Jeff Knight. The two were married in 1984 after Ramtha revealed to the couple that Jeff was JZ's soulmate. They divorced in 1989 due to Jeff's growing misgivings about the work he and his wife were conducting in the name of their spiritual master. The court case brought to light the millions of dollars Knight made from RSE students and raised questions about the level of mental control Ramtha had over his followers, which Jeff claimed to be the reason he went for years without treatment for a serious disease.

Despite this and other controversies over the years, the RSE still maintains a roster of about 5,000 "ramsters" (the self-appellation of Ramtha's students) from all over the world. Ramtha even made his big screen debut via Knight in 2004's *What the Bleep Do We Know!?*, a film about the intersection of quantum mechanics and self-actualization. As for claims of JZ Knight being a fake or charlatan, in 1997 a group of scholars, scientists, and parapsychologists met at the RSE to run tests on Knight while she was channeling Ramtha. The findings seemed compelling—the various biological readings showed Knight was in a different, dissociative state during the channeling process and therefore was unlikely to be consciously masquerading as a centuries-old mystic. While there are still many skeptics and critics of Knight's spiritual enterprise, today the RSE continues to hold seminars, webinars, and online and live classes teaching the wisdom of Ramtha to a willing audience of spiritual seekers.

Natalie R. Dollar

See also: Channeling; Dissociative Identity Disorder; New Age Religion; Psychological Interpretations

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KOREAN SHAMANISM

Korean shamanism, or *muism*, is a practice in which shamans offer spiritual assistance or guidance to clients through the use of *gut* (pronounced "goot"), or rituals that channel animistic gods and spirits. Spirits may be entreated to help solve difficult problems or illnesses, or to ensure good luck. Shamanism in Korea has been variously described as religion, superstition, and therapy and is viewed ambivalently by many Koreans. Korean shamanism's low status in the Confucian hierarchy, its ecstatic rituals, and the preponderance of women in its ranks have often lent the tradition an air of illicitness and undesirability.

Shamanism's roots on the Korean peninsula may extend as far back as the Bronze Age, but the first written mention of shamanic practices based on animistic beliefs is from the Goguryeo Dynasty (37 BCE–668 CE). Records from Koryeo period (918–1392 CE) indicate that a type of shamanistic practice was popular enough among aristocratic women to attract official opposition, while in the succeeding Joseon Dynasty, Confucian social norms led to increased intolerance for shamanism and even public executions of shamans. Japanese anthropologists studied shamanism academically during the Japanese occupation (1910–1945), even as colonial officials worked to exterminate the practice. Throughout Korean history, imported official religions, including Confucianism, Christianity, and Buddhism, have been antagonistic toward indigenous shamans.

Historically, there have been two broadly recognized varieties of Korean shamanism. In the first, predominant in southern and especially southeastern coastal Korea, shamans inherit their roles through family lines. These shamans, known as *tanggol*, adhere to a relatively institutionalized set of beliefs and do not become possessed by spirits during *gut* ceremonies. The second, known as *naerim mudang* or simply as *mudang*, are found in the central and northern regions of the peninsula and near Seoul. *Mudang* experience ecstatic spirit possession during *gut* rituals, and must be initiated into shamanism by a sponsor following a "call" from the spirits rather than inheriting their positions. *Mudang* shamans are the more numerous, and have received the most attention and study from both Korean and Western researchers. Some *mudang* have male assistants, called *paksu*; these assistants are generally subordinate to female shamans.

A distinguishing feature of *mudang* shamanism is *sinbyeong* (pronounced "shin-byung"), or spirit sickness. Prior to becoming initiated into *mudang*

shamanism, women or girls may suddenly become afflicted with any of a number of related symptoms, ranging from gastrointestinal disorders to sleeplessness and depression. Behavioral symptoms of *sinbyeong* can be especially dramatic; some sufferers compulsively run away to mountains and wilderness shrines, while many experience frightening or prophetic trances and visions. Women displaying such symptoms are often diagnosed by local shamans as having *sinbyeong*, which is interpreted as a signal that the spirits have called the patient to a life of shamanic service.

Importantly, *sinbyeong* is usually preceded by extreme adversities in life, such as poverty, abuse, or insurmountable romantic or financial obstacles; such profound life challenges are prominent in the biographies of nearly all Korean shamans. Because of this intimate and often tragic experience with personal suffering, initiated shamans are considered experts in dealing with and treating *han*, an emotion recognized in Korean culture that is characterized by resentment, bitterness, loss, and somatic symptoms such as a tightened throat or chest.

Sinbyeong sufferers who accept their shamanic destiny train under an elder, experienced shaman, called a "spirit mother." Following a period of training and preparation, trainees undergo a *naerim gut*, or an initiation ritual marked by dramatic spirit possession, chanting, and loud music and drumming. The successful completion of a performance in the *naerim gut* marks the initiate's acceptance into the ranks of established shamans. Many *sinbyeong* sufferers refuse to become shamans, fearing low social status and a negative reputation. However, initiated shamans believe that such women are condemned to suffer repeated outbreaks of bad luck, ill health, and spirit sickness until they change their minds and agree to undergo initiation.

Established shamans, who often prefer the term *mansin* ("ten thousand gods") to *mudang*, perform a variety of services for their clients, including fortune-telling, healing, and *gut* ceremonies. The major varieties of *gut* include the *naerim gut*, for the initiation of new shamans; the *uhwan gut*, for clients' personal health and healing; the *jinogi gut*, for the successful passing on of recently deceased spirits; and the *jaesu gut*, for general (especially economic) luck and good fortune. In today's urban South Korea, the *jaesu gut* is the most commonly performed.

In all *gut* ceremonies, shamans have an obligation to be entertaining, especially for the spirits and gods (*sin*) in attendance. Thus, *gut* ceremonies feature spectacles such as cornucopias of fruit, multicolored icons of gods

and spirits, and loud banging on drums known as *changu*. Allowing themselves to become possessed by personal spirits, or *momju*, shamans demonstrate practices such as walking on sharpened knife blades barefoot or balancing heavy pigs' heads on thin dowels. Such difficult feats show that the shaman is in good standing with the spirits, and can thus offer assistance to clients.

While shamanism has traditionally been a rural phenomenon, it has adapted to 21st-century urban culture. The number of practicing shamans is growing in South Korea and may now be as high as 300,000. In Seoul and other cities, numerous shamans rent spaces for *gut* ceremonies, called *kuttang* shrines, or advertise on public buses and on the Internet. Urban shamans' clients still include women suffering from bad luck or illness, but they also now increasingly cater to businessmen and professionals. Despite its increasing public profile, shamanism remains technically illegal and is not protected under the South Korean Constitution's religious liberty clause. However, in the past decade shamanism has achieved some recognition as a form of cultural heritage. Its status in North Korea, where the regime actively persecutes it, is less certain, although as much as 18 percent of the North Korean population has been estimated to hold animistic beliefs.

Connor Wood

See also: Gender; Shamanism

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LARSON, BOB

With a long career as a Christian minister, pastor, author, radio host, and televangelist, the Reverend Bob Larson is also perhaps the most well-known exorcist alive today and has claimed to have performed more than 15,000 exorcisms. Based out of Scottsdale, Arizona, Larson is the force behind Spiritual Freedom Churches, Bob Larson Ministries, the International School of Exorcism, and several other entities. He is the self-described "world's foremost expert on cults, the occult, and supernatural phenomena" and refers to himself as "The Real Exorcist."

Bob Larson was born on May 28, 1944, in California and was raised in the small town of McCook, Nebraska. While details on his early life and education are sparse, Larson played the guitar as a teenager in a band. He later claimed in his books *Hell on Earth* and *The Day the Music Died* that his experiences showed him the evil nature of rock music, and for over two decades starting from the beginning of his ministry in the late 1960s, his preaching fixated on the dangers of the music he called "The Devil's Diversion."

Larson's focus shifted towards cults, the New Age, and the occult in the 1980s. In 1982 his most successful book was released, *Larson's Book of Cults*, which warned its readers of the dangers in everything from Mormonism to martial arts. That same year saw the birth of Larson's syndicated radio call-in show *Talk Back*, which aired for two hours on weekdays on over 175 stations.

During the height of what was known as the Satanic Panic, Larson often engaged in confrontational public debates with Satanists including Zeena LaVey (daughter of Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey) and Nikolas Schreck. Although the authorship of these books has been disputed, Larson also tried his hand at fiction in the early 1990s with several novels including *Dead Air* and *Abaddon*, whose protagonist was a Larson-like radio host who battles Satanic ritual abuse.

Larson claims to have seen a demon in Singapore during a Hindu ceremony in 1967 and encountered his first demon "on American soil" in

1971. There were also frequent mentions of the demonic in his books and on his radio show. But it was in the late 1990s that possession and exorcism became central to Larson's ministry and the focus of his books and international public appearances. This worldview of spiritual warfare in which the demonic is a constant threatening presence brought together all the emphases in his previous works as part of the demonic threat that he was fighting against directly through exorcism: religious cults, sexual immorality, rebellious children, and overt Satanism.

Exorcist Bob Larson, left, at work in a scene from the film *Hellbound?* (AP Photo/Kevin Miller XI Productions Inc.)

The exorcisms that Larson performs are highly theatrical and dramatic, with him playing the central role as the loud and aggressive hero fearlessly battling demonic powers. Larson does not hesitate to place himself in a prominent if not singular role as exorcist, touting the numbers of exorcisms he has claimed to have performed. Playing up his role as the Devil's adversary and the popular image of an exorcist, Larson often dons a Catholic-style clerical collar and wields a large cross in one hand a Bible in the other.

In 2012 Larson founded the "International School of Exorcism," an Internet-based school with a post office box for an address. With tuition of several thousand dollars, the ISE offers to train students through three levels

—Apprentice, Warrior, and Exorcist—to fight against "the Forces of Darkness." Exorcism has even become a family business for Bob Larson. His daughter Brynne and her two friends, sisters Tess and Savannah Scherkenback, all trained by Larson himself, became known as "The Teenage Exorcists" after endless media appearances and trips to Africa, Europe, and the United Kingdom. In 2011, the Canadian production company Cineflix tried to develop a reality television show around Brynne and her friends tentatively entitled *All-American Girls Fighting Satan*. Larson himself was previously the star of a short-lived reality television show for the SyFy network in 2008 entitled *The Real Exorcist.*

It would be hard to draw sharp distinctions between the books, events, and services offered by Larson, or even separate Bob Larson the pastor, the public figure, and brand. His work battling demonic forces is used for fundraising for his ministry, but pastoral work such as private counseling and interventions at his Center for Spiritual Freedom is often done professionally by Larson for substantial fees. His countless media appearances on radio, television talk shows, and in print help provide credibility for his books and appearances, which in turn make him a reliable go-to person for the media on exorcism. Currently Larson is offering not only training in exorcism, but the opportunity to join a DWJD (Do What Jesus Did) team for an annual minimum "tax-deductible investment" of several hundred dollars.

There have been numerous critics of Larson over the years that have questioned his claims of being endangered by his work, his constant fundraising and appeals for money, and the vast wealth he has gained through his ministry. Many have also taken issue with Larson's approach to exorcism itself with the violent nature of his performances, his eagerness to reduce matters of homosexuality and child abuse to demonic possession, and the awkward racial dimensions of his work that equates non-Western faiths with the demonic and seems to consistently trace demons back to either an African or Native American origin. Despite the criticism, the combination of his organizational infrastructure and media savvy means that in all likelihood, Bob Larson will be the public face of exorcism for many years to come.

Philip Deslippe

See also: Deliverance Ministry; Music, Popular

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LITERATURE

Although primarily associated with horror novels, possession and/or exorcism as a literary trope appears in the earliest Western literature. Literary depictions of possession or quasi-possession can be found in, for example, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, where the major plot developments arise out of the actions of characters who are prodded and guided by the gods and other spiritual beings in what amounts to daimonic influence. The tormenting guilt inflicted by the Furies in Aeschylus's *Oresteia* trilogy is likewise a kind of demonic attack on Orestes's psyche. In *The Bacchae* Euripides dramatizes widespread Greek ideas about the power of the god Dionysus to inspire a murderous divine frenzy in his female followers, while in his *Hippolytus* the chorus speculates that the sickness or madness afflicting Phaedra must be caused by a god or goddess that has taken possession of her mind. Several centuries later, the Roman writer Lucian of Samasota describes exorcism rituals in *The Lover of Lies*. Standing behind these and other Greek and Roman depictions, at least in historical retrospect, is Plato's quasi-canonical description in the *Phaedrus* of the divine poetic frenzy that descends upon poets from the Muses. In other words, not only did some of the Greek and Roman writers include the theme of possession in their works, but they shared a common cultural belief (which by Roman times had become more of an ironic affectation) that writers of imaginative literature were themselves possessed or inspired by a muse or genius.

This ambivalent attitude toward possession as either a divine blessing or a demonic affliction became more negative during the several centuries leading up to the birth of the Roman Empire and Christianity, and literary depictions followed suit. The exorcism of evil or unclean spirits plays a central role in all three of the synoptic gospels, and Mark and Luke actually portray it as the first miraculous act Jesus performs. The apostles likewise cast out evil spirits in the gospels and the Book of Acts, and these depictions set the tone for both the religious literature and the related imaginative/fictional literature that would follow for centuries. By the time of the early modern period (ca. 1500–

1700 C.E.), possession and exorcism were long-established literary tropes to which audiences across Europe were well accustomed. Thus, Shakespeare, writing for Elizabethan audiences, made frequent allusions to possession in his plays, including *Twelfth Night*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and, perhaps most powerfully, *King Lear*, where the character of Edgar feigns madness and possession but becomes so darkly and intensely involved in the ruse that some have read it as being authentically demonic. Historical events also interacted synergistically with fictional accounts of possession; only a few years after *King Lear* was written and performed, the famous Loudun possessions took place at a convent in Loudun, France, leading to public exorcisms, a sensational trial in 1634, and, three centuries later, literary immortalization by Aldous Huxley in *The Devils of Loudun* (1952).

The brief flowering of the Gothic genre in the late 18th and early 19th centuries provided a new literary home for possession and exorcism and spawned the supernatural horror genre. Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Anne Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), and James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) all contain references to characters being possessed or mentally/emotionally dominated by forces that are independent of their own thoughts and wills and that are sometimes presented as supernatural and other times explained away as purely psychological. Much Romantic poetry from the same period—for example, Wordsworth's epic *Prelude*, Coleridge's *Christabel* (1798–1800), and Shelley's *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude* (1815), the latter named after a possessing demon from Christian and pagan folklore—likewise explores themes of demonic and/or divine possession, often as related to the creative act of writing poetry itself.

The immediate successors of this tradition continued to make use of the theme. Edgar Allan Poe's short story "Ligeia" (1838) tells of the apparent possession of the narrator's second wife by the spirit of his deceased first wife. Poe also incorporated elements of possession into "Morella" (1835) and "Metzengerstein" (1832). Nathaniel Hawthorne invoked the idea of demonic possession in relation to the character of Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). Robert Louis Stevenson's "Thrawn Janet" (1881) and Guy de Maupassant's "The Horla" (1887) present especially harrowing tales of demonic possession and affliction. Outside the literary tradition of Gothicism and supernatural horror, Fyodor Dostoyevsky drew on the portrayals of demonic possession in

the Gospel of Luke to criticize the Russian intelligentsia for being "possessed" by the spirit of nihilism in his novel *Demons*, first published in English as *The Possessed* (1872). Henry James provided a frightening and ambiguous tale of ghost possession involving two young children in *The Turn of the Screw* (1898).

The early 20th century saw a boom in supernatural horror fiction that provided a fertile venue for literary depictions of possession and/or exorcism. Bram Stoker blended monster tropes with demonic possession in *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911), having previously explored a vampiric theme related to possession and exorcism in *Dracula* (1897). H. P. Lovecraft employed the theme of possession, sometimes in traditional supernatural horrific form and sometimes blended with science fiction, in "The Thing on the Doorstep" (1937), "The Shadow Out of Time" (1936), "The Haunter of the Dark" (1936), "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" (1919), and *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* (1941/1943). Shirley Jackson created a classic novel of quasi-possession in *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), in which a woman's psyche fuses with the sinister supernatural presence that haunts an old mansion. Ray Russell's *The Case against Satan* (1963), now regarded by some readers as a neglected classic, draws on the same 1949 exorcism that would inspire William Peter Blatty to produce the novel that would, in tandem with its iconic film adaptation, become popular culture's touchstone text for such matters: *The Exorcist* (1971). Blatty also wrote a well-received sequel, *Legion* (1983). Robert Marasco's *Burnt Offerings* (1973) shows a modern American family being destroyed, and the mother being possessed, by an ancient fertility goddess. Jay Anson's *The Amityville Horror* (1977) dramatizes a real-world haunting that was rumored to have involved demonic possession. Stephen King included various forms and aspects of possession in many of his novels and stories and, like Lovecraft, used it in both horrific and science fictional contexts—including "The Mangler" (1972), "Trucks" (1973), *The Shining* (1977), *Christine* (1983), *Pet Cemetery* (1983), *The Tommyknockers* (1987), *Desperation* (1996), *Dreamcatcher* (2001), and *Duma Key* (2008). Anne Rice incorporated demonic and other types of possession into her bestselling Vampire Chronicles and Mayfair Witches series. Ramsey Campbell presented a unique and horrifying take on the idea of spiritual and demonic possession in such novels as *The Hungry Moon* (1986), *The Influence* (1988), and, most popularly, *The Parasite* (1980).

Possession and exorcism also informed many literary works in the 20th

and 21st centuries that were only tangentially related, or in many cases not related to the horror genre as such. S. Ansky's play *The Dybbuk* (1914) tells the story of a young bride who is possessed by an evil spirit on the eve of her wedding. A group of teenaged girls in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* (1953), which dramatizes the Salem witch hysteria, feign demonic possession. William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* (1954) shows the descent into savagery of a band of marooned English schoolboys as the emergence of a primal spirit of demonic violence in the absence of civilization's restraining influence. Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Satan in Goray* (1955) depicts the possession of an entire 17th-century village of Jews in Central Europe by a satanic spirit. Paddy Chayevsky's play *The Tenth Man* (1959), featuring a young woman who is possessed by a dybbuk, stands as one of several plays that was inspired to some degree by Ansky's earlier treatment of the theme. Roland Topor's *The Tenant* (1964) is the grim and surreal story of a man who, upon moving into an apartment in Paris where the former tenant committed suicide, finds to his horror that his life is unraveling and his identity is apparently becoming fused with the dead woman's consciousness. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) a woman in post–Civil War America is haunted and possessed by the spirit of her dead baby. In *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a young girl in colonial-era Colombia contracts a case of rabies that is interpreted as demonic possession by her father and the Roman Catholic religious authorities.

Matt Cardin

See also: *Amityville Horror, The*; Blatty, William Peter; Daimon; Dybbuk; *Exorcist, The*; Loudun Possessions; New Testament

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LOA

Loa (also spelled lwa) are spiritual beings of the Haitian religion Vodou (also spelled Voodoo). They are described as spirits or gods and are similar though not identical to the *orishas* in other Afro-Atlantic religions that are derived from the Yoruba tradition. Vodou incorporates Yoruba elements as well as aspects of the Ewe and Fon religions, all of which had an impact on the religious pantheon. Devotees believe that *loa* are present in nature (e.g., trees, rivers, mountains) and that they represent aspects of nature such as thunder, rain, and storm. They are also connected to human activities (healing, fighting, farming, etc.) and have the power to influence human destiny. Human beings must honor them in order to avoid punishment and misfortune. The performance of ceremonies constitutes an important way to honor them as well as allowing them to possess devotees during the ceremony. In exchange *loa* will support their devotees and help in case of need.

Most *loa* have derived from African deities of the Yoruba, Ewe, and Fon traditions. Some *loa*, however, have derived from maroons (runaway slaves) and spirits of the indigenous population of the Caribbean island. Due to religious suppression under slavery some Catholic saints have been seen as representation of some *loa* because both groups of entities are regarded as mediators between God and human beings. *Loa* are categorized into families (*nanchon*), each with specific rituals and characteristics (e.g., music, songs, dances, offerings). *Rada*, *kongo*, and *petro* are the most significant families today, though there are more. *Rada* refers to *Arada*, the name of a kingdom in Dahomey (today, Benin) during the colonial time; *nago* includes Yoruba deities, the *orishas*, and are often seen as subgroup of *rada*. *Kongo* refers to the West African Bakongo region, and *petro* are regarded as Creole *loa* with the name derived from Dom Pedro, a mythical leader of a rebellion of runaway slaves. Linked with their distinct origin, *rada* are characterized as good and harmonious, while *petro* are seen as aggressive, envious, and bitter. Despite this classification it is not possible to divide *loa* clearly because every *loa* is regarded as having multiple aspects, sometimes even both genders. *Rada loa* have therefore kongo or *petro* counterparts that express different aspects of their identity.

Each *loa* has a specific field of responsibility and a variety of traits (speech pattern, body movements, character, preferences in food and clothes).

Among the most important *loa* are Legba who guards crossroads; Dambala, who is regarded as good and wise; Ogou (Ogun), from the Yoruba pantheon, a blacksmith and warrior; and Erzulie, the major female *loa*, who combines aspects of motherhood, love, and beauty (similar to the orishas Yemaya and Oshun) but also aggression and revenge (similar to the orisha Oya). Another important figure in the pantheon is Baron Samdi, often described as the head of the Gédé, the *loa* of the dead. Often portrayed wearing black clothes and a top hat, he is honored in both rada and petro rites.

Bettina E. Schmidt

See also: Afro-Atlantic Religions; Hurston, Zora Neale**;** *Orisha*

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LOUDUN POSSESSIONS

The alleged possessions of the Ursuline nuns of Loudun, France, are considered among the best known accounts of possession in European history. Numerous primary sources in the forms of letters, court documents, decrees, and the personal writings of Jeanne des Anges, the mother superior of the Ursuline convent, testify to the events surrounding the possessions, exorcisms, and trial. In September of 1632, the Ursuline nuns of Loudun reported “spiritual disturbances” in the convent at night, such as seeing the shadows of men and hearing voices. The nuns soon identified the shadows as apparitions of the deceased Fr. Mousaut as well as the controversial local priest of St. Pierre du Marche, Urbain Grandier. Although Grandier was politically well-connected in Loudun, he had previously developed a reputation for an immoral lifestyle, thus acquiring powerful enemies both inside and outside of the church hierarchy. Grandier published a book arguing against priestly celibacy, and in addition to keeping several alleged

mistresses, was rumored to have fathered a child with Philippa Trincant, the daughter of the King's solicitor in Loudun. Grandier was officially tried for immorality in 1630 and initially sentenced to penance and forbidden from returning to clerical office in Loudun. The ruling was subsequently overturned and Grandier acquitted in May of 1634 due to the intervention of a powerful personal friend, Archbishop Bordeaux. Just a few months after Grandier returned to Loudun, the Ursuline nuns began exhibiting symptoms of possession and implicating Grandier as the cause of their spiritual attacks. The nuns experienced involuntary screaming, crying, laughing, shaking, fainting, seizures, and bodily contortions, sometimes into indecent postures. Others reported hearing voices, being struck by unseen spiritual entities, and xenoglossy. Exorcism rituals began shortly after the initial reports. During the exorcisms, Jeanne des Anges along with several other nuns identified Urbain Grandier as the one who summoned the demons to possess the nuns and led them into immorality. In her autobiography, mother superior Jeanne des Anges reported falling prey to the sexual fantasies of Grandier, which she attributed to the influence of her demonic attackers. Twenty-seven nuns were identified as possessed or spiritually oppressed by demonic forces, chief of whom was Jeanne des Anges, who was reported to be possessed by seven demons. The exorcisms were initially carried out by Pierre Barré and the convent director Canon Jean Mignon, the latter of whom was a personal enemy of Grandier. A wave of public exorcisms quickly spread through local chapels outside of the convent among the public, quickly making Loudun a tourist destination for curious observers as well as exorcism specialists. As the exorcisms gained popularity, more priests and exorcists were summoned to the area to assist with the exorcism rites.

The Mother Superior is exorcised by Father Pierre Barre, illustration for *Les Mysteres de la Science* by Louis Figuier, 1886. (Archives Charmet/Bridgeman Images)

Cardinal Richelieu is credited with pursuing the case against Grandier. After his arrest, a physical search of Urbain Grandier's body reportedly identified four marks of the devil. During Grandier's trial, a written pact with the Devil was produced with both Grandier's and the Devil's signatures. Despite several of the nun's attempts to recant their initial accusations, Grandier was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging and burning. In August of 1634, Grandier was hung over a fire; however, the knot was reportedly not properly tied, resulting in him surviving the hanging only to die by the flames.

The nuns continued experiencing manifestations of the alleged possessions after the death of Grandier. In December of 1634, Father Jean-Joseph Surin was summoned to Loudun to continue the exorcisms. In a letter to his confessor Father Datichi dated May 3, 1635, Surin reported an experience in which a devil passed from the body of the possessed into his own, causing shaking, rolling on the floor, and other symptoms. He reported an experience as if two souls suddenly resided within him battling for control of his body. Surin identified the demon Leviathan as the presiding authority over the demonic activity at Loudun. Throughout the course of the exorcisms, Surin developed a lifelong relationship with Jeanne des Anges. He unconventionally combined common exorcism practices with prescribing

spiritual exercises for the possessed to regularly perform to assist in their deliverance. Such unconventional practices concerned Surin's superiors and threatened his continued post at Loudun. In November of 1635, Surin was granted eight days to complete the exorcisms before his removal. Jeanne des Anges wrote of her concern over Surin's departure, which encouraged her to redouble her efforts in her spiritual exercises. Jeanne des Anges claimed on November 5, 1635, during an exorcism session with Father Surin, to have been delivered from the control of Leviathan, one of her seven named demons. Reports of the successful exorcism gained Surin permission to continue working at Loudun. This reported successful exorcism was the first in a series spanning from 1635, until Jeanne des Anges claimed total deliverance from her possessing demons in 1637.

In the final year of her exorcisms, Jeanne des Anges reported a nocturnal visitation from St. Joseph and a guardian angel, the latter of whom would remain with her and become a significant figure in her spirituality for the rest of her life. The two figures anointed Jeanne, forcing her ultimate release from the possessions. Evidence of the anointing was reportedly found in residue on Jeanne's nightdress as well as in the names Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and the name of the recently deceased French saint François de Sales, which appeared in red print on her left hand. Upon hearing of the miraculous deliverance, pilgrims in search of miracles began traveling to Loudun to see Jeanne des Anges and touch her nightdress. The final demon, Behemoth, was reportedly driven out in October of 1637. In 1638, Jeanne des Anges traveled to many of the major cities in France, drawing large crowds in search of miracles.

Jeanne des Anges soon rose to prominence as a spiritual authority and a mystic. Several skeptics questioned the success of her exorcisms and her newfound popularity. Figures such as the French Huguenots accused both the possessions, and the signs of her deliverance of being fraudulent. After gaining a significant spiritual following, Jeanne des Anges wrote an autobiography recounting her experience, which was modeled after *The Life of St. Teresa*. She remained in Loudun where she claimed to communicate with God through her guardian angel.

The historical events behind the trial and written records are difficult to ascertain. Several scholars have endeavored to find naturalistic explanations for the events that transpired, leading to Urbain Grandier's execution. Grandier's immoral lifestyle acquired powerful enemies, including the

convent director Jean Mignon and Cardinal Richelieu, who ordered the arrest of Grandier and sat a personal emissary on the council of judges presiding over the trial. Scholarship, therefore, has produced various speculations about how Grandier's enemies may have either conspired with Jeanne des Anges to stage the possessions or taken advantage of the possession symptomology to implicate Grandier. Sarah Ferber, for example, traced the political agendas that preceded Grandier's execution. Ferber reports that Baron Jean Martin de Laubardement came to Loudun to carry out a royal decree to remove an old castle but was blocked by Governor Jean d'Armagnac with the assistance of Grandier. Records indicate that Laubardement sought support from Cardinal Richelieu to pursue the investigation against Grandier in November of 1633. By December 6, 1633, Grandier was imprisoned, which led to his execution the following August.

Another study of the Loudun possession by Michael de Certeau focused on the events in light of 17th-century spirituality. De Certeau attributes the symptoms to a psychological disorder such as hysteria. De Certeau interprets the Loudun possessions in light of the shifting intellectual climate of 17th-century France. The possessions provided the nuns with a venue through which to make their concerns, fears, and ideas heard by speaking not as themselves but rather as another speaking through them. De Certeau thus focused on the spiritual climate of Loudun, including the wave of exorcisms outside of the convent.

In an article on the many possessions of female convents in Europe, Moshe Sluhovsky observed that mass possessions in religious institutions occurred exclusively among female convents. Sluhovsky, therefore, linked the possessions with the spiritual and social struggles unique to the late medieval and early modern female monastic experience. He claims that the frequency of mass possessions in convents through the 16th and 17th centuries coincides with the circulation of possession reports, but recedes in the 18th century with the decline of these reports. Sluhovsky identified 45 cases of mass possession in convents across Europe, all but 4 of which occurred between 1435 and 1690. One such example with striking similarity to the Loudun possessions is the Aix-en-Provence possessions of 1611 in which two Ursuline nuns, Louise Capeau and Madeleine Demandols, of Aix-en-Provence in southern France claimed to be possessed as a result of Father Gaufridi's pact with the Devil. As with Loudun, the possessions adopted sexual themes, and the priest was eventually tried and executed. The trial

involving the Aix-en-Provence possessions set a precedent for the trial of Grandier, because it was the first trial in which the testimony of a possessed person was considered evidence. Previously in medieval Europe, the testimony of a possessed person was discounted on account of John 8:44's characterization of the devil as the "father of lies." Exorcist Sébastien Michaelis later wrote about the events, publicizing them as evidence of reformation within the church. Shortly thereafter, three nuns in Lille, France, claimed Sister Marie de Sains bewitched them in 1613. A similar accusation occurred in Normandy in the 1640s in which a convent of Hospitaller nuns claimed that two deceased priests brought corruption into the convent. During the exorcisms they accused a local priest, Thomas Boullé, which eventually led to his execution in 1647. In each case, Sluhovsky observed that the nuns experienced physical symptomology of possession and required a prolonged exorcism process. Most of the cases never developed into trials and thus did not gain much notoriety. Sluhovsky argues that instances of mass female possession should be interpreted in light of the growing female mystic spirituality in Catholic Europe. Caught in a life of self-examination and resistance to temptation, the nuns perceived themselves as falling short of their spiritual aspirations. When interpreted through the paradigms of mystic spiritual experience and the assumption that the supernatural comes from the devil more frequently than God, the nuns came to interpret their experience as possession.

The Loudun possessions have been popularized, not only by the surplus of historical records, but also by modern retellings of the story through popular media. In 1952, Aldous Huxley published the book entitled *The Devils of Loudun*. In 1965, John Whitting produced the Broadway play *The Devils*. The account of Loudun was additionally fashioned into an opera in 1969 by Krysztof Penderecki under the same title. Finally, there was the 1970 film by Ken Russell entitled *The Devils*.

Nicholas R. Werse

See also: Catholicism; Conversion Disorder; Gender; Gordet, Dominic

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LUKINS, GEORGE

The story of George Lukins, the "Yatton Demoniac," was one of the most widely known and cited cases of supposed possession in late 18th- and early 19th-century England. His symptoms and his cure became a cause of religious controversy among the intelligentsia of Bristol, the main city in the region. This was a period, during the so-called Enlightenment, when the reality of witchcraft and diabolic possession was still being debated, as illustrated by the Lukins case.

Born in 1744, George Lukins, the son of a tailor, was brought up in the parish of Yatton, Somerset, in southwest England. His life was unremarkable until Christmastime in the winter of 1769–1770. Lukins was out "mumming" with friends—that is going door-to-door performing a seasonal folk play—when he became so inebriated that he had to be carried home to his brother's house. Soon after, he began to suffer from extraordinary fits during which he cursed and used foul language in male and female voices; he leaped around, writhing and contorting his body. He reacted violently in the presence of religious objects or pious words. These were all standard symptoms of diabolic possession familiar from the numerous cases described in popular witch trial pamphlets published during the previous century. At first Lukins claimed he was bewitched, and several people in the neighborhood were accused of being the witches responsible. Charms were purchased from cunning folk to break the spell, but nothing seemed to rid him of his torment. As he began to attract more and wider attention, particularly from clergymen and doctors in the area, Lukins began to shift his emphasis from witches to demonic possession, claiming he was possessed by seven devils.

Debilitated by this apparent supernatural affliction, over the next few years Lukins successfully claimed and lived off parish relief, and a stay at St George's Hospital, Middlesex, in 1775, was also paid for at parish expense. Around 1776 he seems to have recovered enough from his torments to run a

little shop in Yatton. This change in his condition was, perhaps, related to a threat from the parish authorities to have him removed to the island of Flat Holm in the Bristol Channel to be dipped in the sea as a cure for his fits. Lukins's torments began again in 1787, but this time the parish refused him any further financial relief. In response, he requested two guineas to go to Bristol to seek cure from the combined praying power of seven clergymen, but received only ten shillings and six pence. Still, in 1788 Lukins found himself in the care of the Temple Church, Bristol, and its vicar, the Reverend Joseph Easterbrook.

Easterbrook requested several Church of England clergymen to assist him in expelling the devils from Lukins, but they all declined. So it was seven Wesleyan Methodists who gathered to sing hymns and to pray over him on Friday June 13, along with eight other supporters and in the presence of a large crowd. Protestant minsters, no matter what denomination, were not allowed to practice the Catholic rite of exorcism, so all they could do was to call upon the evil spirits to depart, and chase them away with their pious devotion. After two hours, Easterbrook adjured the Devil to depart and Lukins's fits ceased for good. A public thanksgiving service was held in Yatton Church the following week.

Held up by some as a graphic example of the Devil's continuing influence over the mundane world, others considered Lukins a despicable fraud draining the pockets of local rate payers and charitable souls with his claims. The most vocal of the skeptics was the Yatton surgeon Samuel Norman, who kept an eye on his fellow parishioner over the years, and published the most detailed account of the case in his *Authentic Anecdotes of George Lukins, The Yatton Demoniac* (1788). Norman dismissed epilepsy as a cause of Lukins's behavior, as well as symptoms of insanity (of which Norman had family experience).

In the years after 1788 Lukins made a modest living in various lines of work, though he still sought charitable and parish relief from time to time until his death on the February 3, 1805. His demise was reported in several Bristol newspapers, and his story was related numerous times over the next couple of decades. He was the example used to illustrate the entry for "demoniacal possession" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1810), and his name was sometimes dragged up in attacks upon Methodists with regard to their supposed promotion of "superstition" and credulity regarding supernatural matters.

Owen Davies

See also: Dugdale, Richard

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M

MAMI WATA

Mami Wata is a half-woman, half-mermaid water deity best known by Western and Central Africans living near bodies of water. “Mami Wata” is the West African pidgin pronunciation of “Mother Water” and is alternatively spelled “Mami Water,” “Mamy Wata,” and “Mamy Water.” Mami Wata is vain and beautiful and is depicted with flowing black hair, beautifully adorned, accompanied by a snake, and holding a mirror. She is known to offer great wealth and prosperity (as well as fertility to women) to those who worship her and make offerings to her. Mami Wata may take possession of people (both men and women) who are unaware or careless and approach the water too closely. She then becomes that person’s “wife,” and lavishes gifts and money on her new “husband.” This wealth, however, comes at a great price. Those who become possessed by Mami Wata are forbidden from marrying or having sexual relations with another, on pain of death. Mami Wata may also demand a sacrifice of a close family member. Those who consistently have marital problems or who have trouble finding a spouse, especially those who are financially well off, may be suspected of being possessed by Mami Wata.

Because Mami Wata demands such a high price (family and future progeny) for material wealth, the worship of and possession by Mami Wata result in social death without kin. In many West African communities, having children and respecting familial obligations is the greatest social expectation. Its fulfillment renders the individual a respected community member. Mami Wata is thus a symbolic representation of the tension for West Africans between the allure of individual material wealth and the cost of its acquisition: namely, being seen as greedy and antisocial by one’s kin and thus risking social death.

Some scholars claim that coastal West Africans imported the image of Mami Wata from Europeans during the 15th century. When Portuguese trading vessels offering material wealth through trade arrived on the coast, West Africans noted their mermaid statues and figureheads. They then associated that image with material goods and prosperity. Africans on the

coast then appropriated the aquatic image of Mami Wata as a representation of the new, appealing material wealth that exotic Europeans offered. Just as European traders beckoned the financially ambitious with promises of financial gain through trade, so too does Mami Wata beckon those she chooses to the water with promises of material wealth.

Other African scholars argue, however, that West Africans did not simply see the European mermaid statue, deify it, and accept it as a new water goddess. Rather, Mami Wata is a European version of water deities already familiar to West Africans living near bodies of water. Sabine Jell-Bahlsen of Nigeria insists that though Oru-Igbo priests include the Mammy Water icon in their shrines, *Ogbuide*, a principal water goddess who dwells in Oguta Lake, is not derivative of a foreign, European icon that Africans appreciated and adopted as novel. Rather, Nigerians immediately appreciated the mermaid image brought by the Europeans because her features and attributes corresponded to the female water deities that they already worshiped. For the Nigerians living around Oguta Lake, Mami Wata is popularly venerated because she resembles *Ogbuide*, a local water deity essential to the fertility and agricultural sustenance of the community.

Wall painting of Mami Wata from the Volta region, Ghana. (Black Star/Alamy)

Many West Africans continue to make offerings to, and claim to be possessed by, Mami Wata. However, in other parts of West Africa where Pentecostal Christianity is popular, Mami Wata images, shrines, and worship are more rare. While images of Mami Wata used to be prolific in areas such as southern Ghana and Nigeria, since the rapid proliferation of Pentecostalism in these areas, Pentecostal Christians have all but eliminated Mami Wata from their ritual activities.

Pentecostal Christians reject Mami Wata because Pentecostal pastors label her, along with all "traditional" deities and spirits, as Satanic or demonic. Thus, for these Christians, being beckoned or possessed by Mami Wata is tantamount to Satanic seduction. Pentecostal pastors produce films and music that warn Christians of the lurking evil forces of the world, including Mami Wata, and how to avoid them. By distributing a plethora of media productions that the populace can easily and repeatedly view, Pentecostals have instilled an ominous evil threat into popular consciousness such that adherents must be hyperaware of pervasive, invisible dangers such as Mami Wata. This Pentecostal, and particularly sinister, image of a Satanic Mami Wata may even entrap unsuspecting victims. Buyers at the market, for example, may unintentionally purchase bewitched goods from Mami Wata's realm at the bottom of the sea and thereby be seduced by her.

In contrast to this demonic conception, in Ogoniland, Nigeria, there is a proliferation of Mami Wata shrines. Ogoni community members increasingly consider Mammy Wata worship and cult membership as symbolic of their national identity, noble heroism, and resistance to international and local forces that would unjustly appropriate their natural resources. These contrasting examples of images and conceptions of Mami Wata demonstrate both her pervasiveness among, and the diversity of her manifestations and relevance for, West African communities.

Kayla Kauffman

See also: Afro-Atlantic Religions; Pentecostalism

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MARTIN, MALACHI

Malachi Martin (1921–1999) was a controversial Irish Roman Catholic priest and writer of novels and nonfiction works about Catholicism critical of the conflicts and changes brought about after the Second Vatican Council. His most popular works discuss exorcism, the inner workings of the Vatican, and the crisis of religious belief in the modern world.

Malachi Brendan Martin (*Maolsheachlann Breandán Ó Máirtín)* was born in Ballylongford, County Kerry, Ireland. His brother, Francis Xavier Martin (1922–2000), was an Augustinian Friar and Professor of Medieval History at University College Dublin. After receiving his secondary education at Belvedere College, Dublin, Malachi Martin entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus on September 6, 1939. He went on to the National University of Ireland and achieved a bachelor's degree in Semitic Languages and Oriental Studies along with another concentration in Assyriology at Trinity College, Dublin. He continued his studies at the Catholic University of Louvain where he received doctorates in Semitic languages, archaeology, and Oriental history. On August 15, 1954, he was ordained a Jesuit priest and began postgraduate work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Oxford University. He specialized in intertestamental studies and Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts.

His first major work, *The Scribal Character of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, was published in 1958 and was the result of his archaeological experiences in Lebanon and the Sinai Peninsula. It was during this period that he made contributions to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Byblos syllabary. Martin later claimed that he assisted in his first exorcism during this trip. The possessed individual was supposedly an Egyptian youth who had become involved in Satanism and sacrificed his own sisters.

He was recalled to Rome to serve as private secretary to Augustin Cardinal Bea, a fellow Jesuit and biblical scholar, from 1958 to 1964. Martin

served as a translator for the Orthodox Churches and ancient Oriental Churches section of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. He was in Rome during the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), where Cardinal Bea would play a formative role as first president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration of the Church with Non-Christian Religions) on October 28, 1965. He also served as a professor of Aramaic, paleography, and Hebrew and Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

The initially liberal Martin was shocked by deliberations of the Council that allowed for greater degrees of dissent and argument. Shortly after accompanying Paul VI on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he resigned from the Pontifical Biblical Institute and requested a special dispensation from his Jesuit vows in February 1965. This dispensation was confirmed definitely on June 30, 1965, releasing Martin from his vows of poverty and obedience but not of chastity. From that point he would remain an ordained, secular priest. Following this turn of events, he received approval from Paul VI to embark on an apostolate in media and communications and moved to New York City in 1966. His new role in writing and media would be a significant aspect of his work for the remainder of his life.

Martin's next series of books addressed the changing nature of interreligious dialogue and religious identity in modern times. These works included *The Encounter: Religion in Crisis* (1969), *Three Popes and the Cardinal: The Church of Pius, John and Paul in Its Encounter with Human History* (1972), and *Jesus Now* (1973). Although Martin would later identify as a "traditionalist" within Catholic circles, these earlier works expressed a broader searching for ideas on the changing church and the modern world. In *Three Popes and the Cardinal* in particular, which discusses Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, and Cardinal Bea in relation to the Second Vatican Council, Martin's discontent with what he saw as the failures of the pre-Conciliar Church and the lost opportunities of the Council came to the forefront. Martin denounced the structuralism of the Catholic Church, where an overemphasis on hierarchy developed into stagnation and arrogance. Over time, he developed his concerns about the destructive forces of rebellion and dissent rocking the supposed "springtime of renewal" of the Catholic Church.

In 1975 he published the first of his four best-selling works, *Hostage to the Devil: The Possession and Exorcism of Five Living Americans.* Martin described five exorcisms in detail and focused on the existential dislocation

of the possessed and the spiritual and physical havoc the experience brought on the individual and their loved ones. He addressed both the reality of personal and intelligent evil and how the individualized carnal weaknesses natural to all humans made them vulnerable to the temptations of sin. This work was further supported by anecdotes and opinions formed from years of experience as an exorcist and as an assistant at exorcisms. Many years after the publication of *Hostage to the Devil*, Martin would claim further that he participated in a few hundred major exorcisms during his lifetime.

Martin continued to publish a number of pointed, fictional novels about life at the Vatican, including *The Final Conclave* (1978), *Vatican: A Novel* (1986), and *Windswept House* (1996). He followed these works with a number of nonfiction books, which included *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church* (1981) and *Rich Church, Poor Church: The Catholic Church and Its Money* (1984). The 1987 bestseller *The Jesuits: The Society of Jesus and the Betrayal of the Roman Catholic Church* carried his criticism of the doctrinal changes of the Second Vatican Council to the dissent of his own former religious order.

During the last decades of his life, Martin moved closer to the traditionalist wing in the Catholic Church, offering the Latin Mass and associating with the philosopher Rama Coomaraswamy. He was also a supporter of a great number of conspiracy theories related to the Catholic Church, including the supposed murders of Pius XI and John Paul I, the influence of Soviet operatives in the Vatican, and the failure of John XXIII and his successors to fulfill the Third Secret of Fatima. Martin died from a brain hemorrhage after falling in his Manhattan apartment in 1999.

Sean P. Phillips

See also: Catholicism

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MENGHI, GIROLAMO

Girolamo Menghi, an Italian Conventual Franciscan of the 16th century, is recognized as the most important Renaissance exorcist, being one of the most distinguished demonologists of his time. He wrote and edited numerous handbooks on exorcism and various demonological tracts. Born in Viadana in the Po Valley in 1529, he joined the Black Franciscans at age 20. He worked in various convents of the order where he studied a wide range of philosophical and theological topics. In 1598, he was elected Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

In 1573, Menghi published the *Aureus tractatus*, his fellow friar Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio's *Golden Treatise* on exorcism. Menghi thoroughly revised and expanded Mazzoloni's manual before he published his own work, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, in 1576. This "Comprisal of the Art of Exorcism" discusses the theology of phenomena such as possession and witchcraft. Menghi drew from Heinrich Kramer's infamous *Malleus Maleficarum*, the *Hammer of Witches*, as a template for this text.

In 1576 he published his *Flagellum daemonum* (The Daemon's Scourge), followed by *Fustis daemonum* (The Daemon's Bludgeon) in 1584. Both books were published in one volume from 1598 and soon became popular all over Europe. The texts consist of both a theoretical treatise and a hands-on guide describing actual exorcisms. *Fustis daemonum* lists exorcisms that follow a strict formula: After an initial prayer, signs of the cross are made, followed by incantations, a reading from the Gospels, and repeated orations. After this an aspersion and the reading of ten exorcist dictums end the session. The *Flagellum daemonum* includes an addendum describing elixirs to cure possessions magically. *Fustis daemonum* integrated such recipes in its second part. *Flagellum daemonum* and *Fustis daemonum* were widely read during the 16th century. Both were included in the *Thesaurus exorcismorum* from 1608 and published further in compilations with the *Hammer of Witches*.

Menghi's lesser-known work *Eversio daemonum e corporibus oppressis* (Fall of Daemons Vicious from the Bodies of the Possessed), published in 1588, describes historic exorcisms that he believed were performed poorly and presents his revisions of these rituals. His third major work after the *Flagellum daemonum* and the *Fustis daemonum* was the 1596 *Fuga daemonum*, the *Flight of Daemons*, which also included both theoretical and practical sections. Although the *Fuga daemonum* has not circulated as widely

as the other two books, it is particularly interesting because Menghi addresses his contemporaries who are critical of exorcism. He defends the practice of exorcism by referring to Biblical scripture, including the Song of Songs, and to the Church Fathers, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure in particular. Girolamo Menghi died in Italy in 1609.

Thomas Hardtke

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MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

The archangel Michael is the angelic figure in Jewish and Christian tradition most closely associated with protection from evil spiritual forces. In Christian iconography, he is usually depicted wielding a drawn sword or a spear against the devil, who is pinned down under Michael's foot. The archangel Michael is first found in Jewish texts of the Second Temple period, which would eventually shape early Christian conceptions of the archangel. More recently, Michael has been appropriated by New Age and metaphysical religious traditions.

The roots of Michael's designation as the adversary of spiritual evil are found in his role as a heavenly warrior and champion of God's people in the Second Temple Jewish and early Christian literature. The earliest references to the archangel Michael appear in segments of the Jewish text 1 Enoch that date to the third century BCE. In these texts, Michael is described as one of the four chief angels commissioned by God to rid the earth of wicked fallen angels and their monstrous progeny (1 En. 9:1–10:22). God commands Michael to bind Shemihazah, the chief of the fallen angels, and his fellow rebels until the day of their judgment and to destroy the giants (the half-breed sons of fallen angels and human women). In the Hebrew Bible, Michael is mentioned for the first and only time in the Book of Daniel (10:13; 10:21; 12:1), where he appears in Daniel's dream visions as Israel's divine champion who leads the heavenly armies to war in defense of God's people.

The *War Scroll* of the Jewish sectarian Qumran community, written around the same time as Daniel or slightly later, similarly depicts Michael as the military leader of the forces of light against the forces of darkness.

Early Christians took up Second Temple Jewish conceptions of Michael as the commander of angelic armies and the defender of the righteous. The New Testament Epistle of Jude mentions in passing that Michael struggled with the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 1:9). One of the most influential Christian texts about Michael is the description of his battle with Satan in chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation. John of Patmos, the author of the book, has a vision in which Satan takes the form of a red dragon. In the vision, a war breaks out in heaven between Michael, who commands the army of God's angels, and Satan, who commands his own army of angels. In the end, Satan and his angels are cast down to earth.

In the centuries following the New Testament period, Michael was called upon by Christians, Jews, and pagans as a divine protector, warrior, and healer. Michael's reputation as a healer was often linked to his power over spiritual evil. In the ancient world, illness was generally associated with demonic activity. Christians, Jews, and pagans also invoked Michael in various magical practices. Practitioners of magic wrote incantations on amulets calling upon Michael and other angels to protect individuals from demons and sorcery and on incantation bowls designed to protect homes. Michael plays a major role in the Testament of Solomon, a Jewish and Christian magical text that was composed sometime during the first through third centuries CE. According to the text, Michael was sent by God to deliver a magic ring to King Solomon, an important Israelite king described in the Hebrew Bible. This ring gave Solomon power over all demons, and it allowed Solomon to force demons to help him build the Jerusalem Temple.

Michael's identity as a conqueror of demonic forces found one of its best-known expressions in the Prayer to Saint Michael instituted by Pope Leo XIII. In 1886, this prayer was added to the Leonine Prayers, which were to be recited by Roman Catholics after every Low Mass. English translations of the Latin prayer vary in details, but one such translation is as follows:

> Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through

the world for the ruin of souls.

The Archangel Michael casting down the dragon as described in Revelation, c.1500, National Museum of Art. Copenhagen, Denmark. (Prisma/UIG via Getty Images)

The purpose of this prayer was to call upon Michael to suppress demonic activity in the world, which the Pope linked to the Holy See's potential loss of political sovereignty in Italy. The regular recitation of the Leonine Prayers ceased in 1964, but the prayer to Saint Michael is still recited by some Catholics in personal devotions and for the purpose of battling spiritual evil. According to Catholic legend, Pope Leo XIII composed this prayer to Saint Michael after he had a vision of demonic forces congregating in Rome. In 1890, Pope Leo XIII established a rite of exorcism to combat the power of the devil in the world (rather than to exorcise a specifc individual), which began with another prayer to Saint Michael. Michael does not figure prominently in the Catholic rite of exorcism for a possessed individual—he is only mentioned by name during the Litany of the Saints.

Catholic exorcists still call on the archangel Michael today to do battle with demons. World-renowned Roman Catholic exorcist Fr. Jose Antonio

Fortea believes that God has given Michael the special charge of handling demons. Another well-known Roman Catholic exorcist, Gabriele Amorth, teaches that demons are particularly afraid of Michael, and that images of the archangel are an effective tool for resisting demons.

Historically Michael was called upon not only by Christians but also by Jews and pagans. The interreligious importance of Michael continues into the present. Many adherents of "New Age" or metaphysical religious traditions hold angels and archangels in high regard. In these traditions, which generally lack a strong concept of the demonic, Michael is often called upon to dispel "negativity" or "negative energy." He is also called upon for general protection from danger, to instill courage, and to bolster inner strength or motivation.

Daniel Wise

See also: Amorth, Gabriele; Catholicism; Incantation Bowl; Judaism; New Age Movement

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MICHEL, ANNELIESE

Anneliese Michel was a German woman known globally for her repeated exorcisms and tragic death as a result in 1976. A criminal inquiry, infamous trial, and the subsequent conviction in 1978 of her parents and exorcists for homicide due to negligence attracted intense domestic and international interest. A chapel built at her former home became a place of pilgrimage for those believing Michel to be a martyr. Furthermore, the release of many loose adaptations of her life, most notably *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* (2005) but

also *Requiem* (2006) and *Anneliese: The Exorcist Tapes* (2011), have increased her case's renown and thereby fueled the debate over her diagnosis.

Michel was born on September 21, 1952, in Leiblfling, Bavaria, Germany, to devout Roman Catholic parents Josef and Anna (née Fürg). She was the eldest child of four girls. Her father was an emotionally inaccessible World War II veteran who exhibited symptoms now recognized as post-traumatic stress disorder. Her mother was an overbearing micromanager over all of her children's affairs, stifling their social development. As the eldest daughter, Michel took the brunt. Anna meted out severe punishments if ever questioned or transgressed, including failure to meet her unreasonable expectations of perfection. A highly devout woman, very concerned with social appearances, Anna is believed to have used religion as a means of punishment and certainly for emotional manipulation. She forced the family to keep her eldest daughter's epilepsy a secret for fear of negative social stigma, including hiding her in an upstairs hallway for the final months of her life.

At age 16, Michel suffered a blackout, which resembled sleep paralysis paired with nocturnal enuresis (involuntary urination/bedwetting). A year later, in 1969, her doctor suggested that she might have epilepsy. As her seizure-like activity continued, she began to see faces of demons, and most of her conversations centered on religious content. Although electroencephalography (EEG) did not confirm epilepsy, her doctor prescribed Dilantin for the seizure-like fits and possible olfactory hallucinations of feces. Despite treatment, she reported frequent headaches. The visions of grimacing faces, perceived to be possession by her friends and family, increased and were now paired with auditory hallucinations telling her that she was damned to hell. Witnesses claimed that her blue eyes turned black (perhaps due to pupil dilation), that she was depressed with suicidal ideation, and that she took on the personality of a man on a bus trip returning from a visit to a shrine in Italy. Subsequently, her doctor prescribed Aolept drops (containing the antipsychotic medication pericyazine) for the hallucinations of faces in addition to her anticonvulsant. From then on, Michel decided to keep her hallucinations a secret from her doctors.

While at university studying for a degree in education, she had an EEG sleep lab that revealed a left temporal lobe discharge confirming epilepsy. As a result, her medicine was switched from Dilantin to Tegretol. Concurrently, her therapist diagnosed her with a depressive psychosis that he attributed to

her restrictive parental upbringing. An incident of self-perceived paralysis resulted in a second EEG confirming left temporal lobe epilepsy. However, despite pharmacotherapy, Michel continued to express many odd behaviors and sensations. These included telling her boyfriend that she was numb, sexually frigid, and could not love; claiming to lack volition and to live in a different world from everyone else; experiencing hours'—or even days'—long fits of catatonia while viewing religious icons and refusing to eat; making animal sounds and bizarre grimaces; and claiming automatic writings from the Virgin Mary.

As the situation appeared to be getting worse even with continued medical treatment, Michel's pious family decided to turn to the church to determine if she was possessed and could be helped. On August 3, 1975, Bishop Josef Stangl finally conceded to allow a small exorcism by Frs. Ernst Alt and Arnold Renz. After reported improvement, Stangl approved the great exorcism rite the next month. Her behavior continued to escalate in severity and now included pray-shouting, multiple catatonic episodes, screaming until hoarse, racing throughout the house, crushing apples, throwing people and objects, pica (eating substances that are not food), and exposing herself. In a series of more than 67 exorcisms, she revealed that she was possessed by Lucifer, Judas Iscariot, Emperor Nero, Cain from Genesis, Adolf Hitler, Valentin Fleischmann (a disgraced 16th-century priest from Alt's parish, about whom Alt spoke with Anna, where Michel could overhear, prior to this personality's first appearance), and various unnamed others.

On July 1, 1976, at the age of 23, Michel was found dead in her bed at her parents' house in Klingenberg am Main. An autopsy revealed that her death was the result of dehydration, malnutrition, and complications from pneumonia. Although no focal lesions caused by epilepsy could be found on the brain at autopsy, this is common among autopsies of epileptics. The autopsy results concluded that she exhibited an epileptic psychosis. Based on all the evidence, it appears that Michel suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy with associated psychosis rather than demonic possession.

Arguments for the misidentification of Michel as possessed are strong. There was a lack of the necessary priestly consensus and study. Alt was young, inexperienced, and possibly also mentally unstable (a history of schizophrenia and, during the police investigation, odd behavior with magical thinking/schizotypyal personality traits); whereas the clerical exorcist is supposed to be older, well-studied, and mentally sound. Michel exhibited no

clear supernatural abilities or other phenomena normally associated with authentic possessions. Although the alleged demons sometimes spoke in Latin, this was a language Michel had studied almost to fluency. Furthermore, Michel was said to have the stigmata (miraculously appearing marks that resemble the wounds of Christ). However, autopsy revealed these marks to be pressure sores caused by prolonged kneeling. Finally, the claim to be possessed by human beings is against Roman Catholic doctrine. Thus, in light of the neurological, postmortem, and theological evidence, it is reasonable to assume the famous "Case from Klingenberg" was a tragic misdiagnosis of demonic possession for a woman who was severely mentally ill, and who thus died from malnutrition and dehydration, not from demonic activity.

Edward Justin Modestino and Christopher S. Halloran

See also: Automatic Writing; Deaths Resulting from Exorcism; Psychological Interpretations

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MIKO

Miko are female spirit mediums originally associated with specific Shinto temples who become possessed by indigenous Japanese deities (*kami*) during divination rituals. *Miko* themselves trace the lineage of their art back to the goddess Ame-no-Uzume, who Japanese myths claim engaged in a wild, boisterous dance to lure the Japanese Sun Goddess Amateratsu from her cave. This mythic event is memorialized in sacred dances performed by *miko* to this day. Beyond these ecstatic dances, *miko* also performed a variety of

spiritual activities, including channeling spirits of the dead, exorcism of unwanted spirits, transmitting oracles from both Shinto and Buddhist deities, ritual blessings, and fortune telling.

Although originally quite powerful in prehistoric Japan, *miko* eventually lost their political power as the Japanese state solidified in the sixth and seventh centuries CE. In 645 CE, the practice of spirit mediumship, including *miko*, was outlawed in an effort to further government control across Japan; these laws were strengthened in 718 CE, forcing many *miko* to enter into exile. Despite this decline in political power, *miko* continued to play an important role in the spiritual life of Japan, especially among commoners and peasants. Some *miko* eventually moved from their place in Shinto temples and worked independently in Japanese society, often traveling from village to village to perform services. Over time, the role of *miko* as spirit mediums became less important while their roles as entertainers and musicians became the majority of their religious work. While *miko* continue to exist at Shinto shrines, their role as Shinto religious figures has shifted almost completely from spirit medium into the realm of ritual assistant.

Natasha L. Mikles

See also: Gender; Japan; Kagura

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***Miko* temple dancers in traditional dress, circa 1900. (Popperfoto/Getty Images)**

MONGOLIA

The Mongols are an ethnic group originating from Inner Asia. Today, large populations of Mongols live in Mongolia, China, and Russia where they participate in different cultures and religious traditions. However, Mongols have traditionally been pastoral nomads who follow an animistic belief system. In the 13th century, the Mongols formed a powerful empire under Genghis Khan (r. 1206–1227) and adopted Uigur Buddhist traditions and later Tibetan Buddhism. Buddhist elements have blended with indigenous shamanic practices to produce a rich tradition of spirit possession. Several forms of possession and exorcism are still practiced in Mongolia today. In addition to shamanism, ideas of spirit possession occur in Mongolian forms of "folk Buddhism," bardic storytelling, and various forms of exorcism.

Mongolian religious practices have been recorded in Mongolian, European Christian, and Chinese sources, especially after the 13th century. The earliest accounts of Mongol culture describe shamanic figures who would enter a trance state, allowing spirits to speak through them and deliver

prophecies. The Franciscan friar William of Rubruck, writing from 1253–1255 CE, described such a figure: “[He] begins repeating his incantations, and strikes violently the ground with a drum he holds. Finally he enters into a fury, and causes himself to be bound. Then comes the devil in the dark, and gives him the meat to eat, and he gives answers.” The Mongolian language has several terms to describe such figures including *böö* (shaman), *udgan* (shamaness), and *dsairan* (shaman of high rank).

Some services commonly associated with shamans, such as divining the future by examining the shoulder bones of livestock (scapulimancy), prayer beads, or sheep innards do not involve trance states. Additionally, there are several forms of shamanic trance in Mongolian tradition, and not all are regarded as a form of possession. However, the most widely used term for a trance state in Mongolian is *ongon orox*, literally, “the spirit enters.” During rituals, the shaman’s soul (*süns*) is believed to withdraw, allowing spirits to enter. As with many shamanic traditions around the world, the spirits are understood to choose certain people for initiation as shamans. Fainting or seizures may be regarded as a form of uncontrolled possession as the spirits seek to make contact. After initiation, shamans learn to control their interaction with the spirit world, becoming possessed only during voluntary rituals. Such rituals must be held at the correct time and location, and shamans must honor a number of taboos before undertaking them. A few shamans were famous for using alcohol to enhance their rituals; however, this was not a widespread practice.

The shaman and his/her assistants call the spirits, which include beings from Buddhist tradition as well as pre-Buddhist shamanic spirits, using a special invoking song. Each entity has a particular tune and rhythm used to call it. Shamanic rituals conducted during the day are described as “shamanizing on foot” because they do not require the ritual clothing or drums (drum and jaw harp are considered to be shamanic vehicles) employed by Mongolian shamans. More elaborate rituals called “shamanizing with a vehicle” are held at night. These rituals employ a special cloak embellished with tassels, feathers, and iron pendants as well as headgear (usually a crown made of feathers or iron) and a drum. The spirits called at night are more powerful and also more dangerous. The special cloak and headgear function as ritual armor and a helmet that protect the shaman from danger.

When they enter the shaman, the entities are believed to occupy particular parts of the body depending on their nature: deities inhabiting the upper

world occupy the head and torso while spirits residing in the underworld enter into the shaman's lower body. In this way, the shaman's body is imagined as a microcosm of the cosmos. A shaman's song invoking the deity Dayan Deerkh illustrates how spirits take residence in the shaman's body:

Oroe biyīg n' *Očirwān' ejelsen,* *Dal biyīg n'* *Dalan tawan Maxgal ejelsen,* *Dund biyīg n'* *Xar cagān jügīn tenger nar xürēlsen,* *Dōd biyīg n'* *Dogšin lusīn xad xürēlsen,* *Xan bogd Dayin Dērx-ē!*	As to the top of my body, It is Vajrapani, who occupied it. As to the shoulder of my body, It is the seventy-five Mahakalas, who occupied it. As to the middle part of my body, It is surrounded by the gods of the black and white directions. As to the lower part of my body, It is surrounded by the fierce Dragon Kings. Majestic, holy Dayan Deerkh! (*Recorded and translated by Ágnes Birtalan*)

Anthropologists debate whether the shaman's soul is understood to be absent during ritual or not. Although the spirits speak through the shaman, the shaman's personality is clearly still present and in control of the ceremony. The shaman maintains a dialogue with the spirits, questions them, and then dismisses them at the ritual's conclusion. Occasionally the shaman and the spirits will argue or scold one another.

Although multiple spirits may speak during one ceremony, normally only one is present at a time. They generally speak in Mongolian (the language of their audience), however, certain types of spirits may make animal sounds, exhibit glossolalia, or speak in the languages of neighboring ethnic groups, such as the Turkic speaking Tuwas. Every shaman has several protector or helper spirits known as *ongon*. These are spirits of departed shamans or other

members of the community. When possessed by the *ongon* spirits, the shaman imitates their behavior. The shaman may move and talk like an old man, a young girl, a lame person, or whoever the *ongon* was in life. Often, a spirit's characteristics will be familiar to the audience either from folk narratives or the ritual songs used to call it.

Once the spirit has manifested, assistants will often argue with it, persuading it to be helpful to the shaman's clients and the community. The spirits may require special offerings in exchange for their help. Occasionally, the shaman will faint during the ritual. This is interpreted as a sign that the spirits are discontent, do not wish to answer the shaman's call, or are not interested in helping the shaman's clients. In these cases the shaman's assistants try to appease the spirits. After the spirit delivers a message and departs, the shaman and the assistants will interpret the spirit's message for the audience.

In some territories of Mongolia, Tibetan Buddhism has displaced traditional shamans. However, spirit possession occurs in these territories as well. A religious specialist called a *gürtem/gürtüm(be)* (from the Tibetan expression: *sku-rten*) is consulted to invoke a Buddhist deity (usually a fierce of wrathful one). Using the *gürtem* as a medium, the deity can deliver prophecies, give advice on treating sick people, or provide other services. The *gürtem* uses ritual items from Tibetan Buddhism such as headgear embellished with five skulls and a sword. Other specialists known as *choijing* (*chos-kyong* in Tibetan) or *laiching* (probably from *gnas ch'un* in Tibetan) perform a similar role by personifying Buddhist protector deities for the purposes of divination or healing.

Spirit possession also plays a role in traditional storytelling. Heroic epics are very popular among the nomadic peoples of Inner and Central Asia. Epics occupy many thousands of lines written in alliterative verse. These are recited by bards accompanied by a stringed instrument, and a performance may last for hours or even days. These performances require a special ability that is comparable to a trance state. Much like shamans, it is believed that bards are chosen by spirits and receive their ability from the realm of supernatural beings.

In the case of unwanted spirit possession, either shamans or Buddhist monks are sought for exorcism. It is sometimes difficult to discern shamanic practices from Buddhist folk practices. Typically, a sick or suffering person will consult an exorcist who banishes the harmful spirit. The spirit must then

be sent somewhere else such as an effigy (*dsolig*), which is usually made of grass, livestock, or occasionally into another person. Buddhist exorcists employ formulas recorded in manuals. Shamans use a combination of narratives, invocations, and incantations. However, both types of exorcists use the same three-part process: (1) An effigy-figure or animal is prepared as a vessel for the harmful spirit, (2) the spirit is transplanted from the client into the vessel, and (3) the vessel is destroyed. Effigies may be burned or buried in holes in the ground while animals are either slaughtered or set free.

Ágnes Birtalan

See also: Buddhism; Shamanism; Storytelling and Possession; Tibet

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Related Primary Document: "Buddhas' and Gods' Invocation to Dayan Deerkh, Ataa tenger, Bull Lord" (Mongolian, 20th Century)

Burxan tengrīn dudlaga (Dayan Dērx, Atā tenger, Bux noyon) *or "Buddhas' and Gods' Invocation to Dayan Deerkh, Ataa tenger, Bull Lord" is a traditional invocation used by a Mongolian shamaness. The text was recorded outside of ritual-circumstances during field research in 1998 from Khükhenjii—a female shaman, belonging to the Darkhads (a North-Mongolian ethnic group). As the text was dictated and not sung during a ritual (its proper context), it contains only the traditionally inherited / learnt*

parts (invoking and praising the spirits and deities). In application, a client would consult the shamaness and the chant would be modified to suit the client's needs.

The text reflects the nomadic life style by mentioning the felt tent (the yurt, in Mongolian ger*), and the pantheon of Mongolian ethnic groups that combines Buddhist and native deities. Spirits of the native religious views such as the* ongon *(the protecting spirit of shamans) and Damdin (a Buddhist deity of Tibetan origin) are called simultaneously by the female shaman.*

My *ongon*-spirit Buddha, god,
My five majestic gods,
Five destiny [spirits] who looked [after us]!
You, who have pure silver [shine],
You, who have pure golden beam,
You, who have majestic bronze shine,
Queen grey-haired destiny spirit!
You sit sloping
On the stretcher of the wall,
You sit playing
On the stretcher of the roof-ring,
You guard fencing off and counting
Your fat-white merits,
You watch guarding and counting
Quite a few persons;
[Let] the whole family be in good health,
[Let] the flap of the [*dēl*-gown] be full,
You protect what is to be protected,
You bestow your golden sanctity,
You become
The pillar of the small tent,
You become
The destiny of my infants,
You sit sloping
On the stretcher of the lattice-wall,
You sit playing
On the stretcher of the roof-ring,
You guard fencing off and counting

Your fat-white merits;
You save [us] protecting and
You clear off and sweep away
The mouth of the dog
That comes howling,
The harm of the thief
That comes to catch the horse with a catching pole,
The cough
That comes to suffer,
The miseries
That come to infect;
You protect and watch
The life and age;
You ascend above,
You chatter at [our] side,
You become
The companion beside [us],
You become
The wing of the hawk,
You become
The pillar of the small tent,
You become
The destiny [spirits] of the infants;
You watch guarding
My offspring, and numerous children,
Deeds and fate,
Life and age,
You reside mercifully bestowing your golden bliss.
Please descend sloping
Through the stretcher of the lattice-wall!
Please descend playing
Through the stretcher of the roof-ring!
You guard fencing off and counting
Your counted white merits,
You watch guarding and counting
Quite a few persons.
[Let] the family be in good health,

[Let] the flap of the [*dēl*-gown] be full!
You mercifully give your redemption of mercy
You bestow your golden bliss.

Here the names of the invoked spirits and gods will follow, such as,

Ataa Buddha, god,
Damdin,
Bull Lord …

Introduction, recording, and translation by Ágnes Birtalan

MOROCCO

Belief in possession by *jinn* occurs throughout the Islamic world, often mixing with local traditions and folklore. Morocco has an especially rich tradition of *jinn* possession, including numerous techniques and religious specialists that can exorcise or protect against the *jinn* as well as groups that venerate *jinn*. A survey conducted in 2013 indicated that 90 percent of Moroccans believe in *jinn*. *Jinn* are generally regarded as evil spirits that can possess humans as well as animals, causing illness, madness, and other misfortunes. In Moroccan Arabic they are often described as "masters" (*mwalin*) or "owners" (*mluk*). A possessed person is described as *majnun* ("with the *jinn*"), *maskun* ("inhabited"), or *mamluk* ("possessed"). Anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano has studied cases of *jinn* possession in Morocco and noted that those regarded as possessed exhibit classic symptoms associated with possession states throughout the world, including tremors and convulsions, fainting, speaking in tongues, or incoherent thoughts and behavior. Moroccans seeking to exercise *jinn* may seek the help of *fuqaha* (Islamic legal experts), *shuwwafat* (seers), or *marabouts* (saints). All of these specialists are thought to have power over the *jinn*. Morocco is also home to several brotherhoods of Sufi mystics, including the Gnawa and the Hamadsha, who are often sought to exorcise *jinn*. Finally, there are thousands of mausoleums throughout Morocco where Sufi saints are buried. The power of the saints is so great that simply visiting their grave is believed to be an effective form of banishing *jinn*.

Jinn can be either male or female (known as *jinniyya*) and have unique personalities and abilities. One of the most famous *jinn* in Moroccan legend

is a female spirit known as Aisha Qandisha or Lalla Aisha. She is said to appear as a beautiful woman with the legs of either a goat or a donkey. She is described as having a libidinous, whimsical, jealous, and vindictive character. She is a particularly dangerous for men, whom she "marries" and drives mad.

While most Moroccans fear *jinn* possession, the Sufi order known as the Gnawa believe that *jinn* possession can be positive. The Gnawa are one of the so-called "black brotherhoods" of Northern Africa. These groups are descended from West Africans who were originally brought to Morocco and other North African countries as slaves during the 15th and 16th centuries. They hold ceremonies that combine Islam with pre-Islamic African traditions. These ceremonies feature music to induce a state of *jinn* possession. Those who become voluntarily possessed are believed to have the power to heal or drive out unwanted spirits. Anthropologist Deborah Kapchan has suggested that these rituals reflect the Gnawa's history as slaves: The state of being possessed by a *jinn* is structurally similar to being possessed a slaver; however, in Gnawa rituals possession ultimately leads to liberation from adversity.

Scholars and anthropologists have been studying *jinn* possession in Morocco since the late 19th century and have produced several interpretations of the role possession plays in Moroccan society. Several scholars have suggested the practice of exorcising *jinn* works as a form of social control by encouraging people to conform to religious standards. This is especially the case for the more legalistic *fuqaha*, who generally regard *jinn* as demonic and who interpret possession as a sign of moral weakness. They often claim that only impious Muslims are susceptible to possession. Other scholars have suggested that *jinn* possession can be socially advantageous for those who experience it. Crapanzano produced a book about a Moroccan tilemaker named Tuhami who experienced *jinn* possession. Crapanzano suggested that possession allowed Tuhami to shift responsibility onto the possessing entity, giving him a sort of freedom. Another seminal work is Margaret Rausch's examination of Moroccan women known as *shuwwafat* who serve as spirit mediums or seers and also as healers. Rausch suggests that by serving their clients (who are primarily female), the *shuwwafat* perform a "therapeutic" task, helping their clients to deal with the problems of a changing society.

Araceli González Vázquez

See also: Islam; Jinn

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MUSIC, POPULAR

Themes of demonic affiliations and spiritual redemption populate musical culture and have roots that run deep into European musical tradition. Early medieval music practices referred to the tritone (an interval of an augmented fourth/diminished fifth) as representing demonic forces, and aptly named it *diabolus en musica* (the Devil in music). This interval evenly split the fledgling eight-tone octave construction that was at the forefront of early tonality. The development of more complicated harmonic structures during the Baroque and subsequent eras lessened the sting of such a jarring interval.

Early performers were sometimes assumed to embody demonic powers to rationalize impressive virtuosity on their instruments, such as violinist Niccoló Paganini (1782–1840). Paganini displayed unrivaled showmanship and employed specialized performance techniques during his career. By modern standards, he is considered a prime innovator of modern violin technique, but at the time he represented a mystical figure who could coax otherworldly sounds from the violin and hypnotize audiences as a result of alleged demonic intervention.

A specific musical instrument is sometimes portrayed as a vessel for demonic possession instead of the performer. One version of this tale was realized in 1918 by Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) in his *L'Histoire du Soldat* (the Soldier's Tale), telling the Russian folk tale of a soldier returning home from war. He trades his violin to the Devil for unlimited financial gain, only to fall prey to the Devil's mischief. This story is retold in Charlie Daniels's

“The Devil Went Down to Georgia” (1979).

A similar collection of tales is found in the songs of American Delta blues artists from the early 20th century. Many blues songs reference crossroads, which could allude to specific geographic locations in the south where bluesmen went to make their deals with the Devil, but also use “crossroads” as a metaphor for life-changing events. Robert Johnson (1911?–1938), much like Paganini, was rumored to have sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for unmatched musical virtuosity and fame. In other parables, contemporaries such as Eddie James “Son” House (1902–1988) left a life of sacred service to pursue a new calling as a blues musician, while former bluesman Thomas Andrew “Georgia Tom” Dorsey (1899–1993) did the exact opposite to become a leading composer of blues-infused gospel music following the tragic deaths of his wife and son in 1932.

Beginning in the 1950s, demonic themes in popular music focused on the struggle between the traditional conservative mindset and increasingly rebellious teenagers. This had little to do with actual demonic possession, and more to do with controlling the infusion of black “rhythm and blues” music into early white “rock and roll” culture. Elvis Presley (1935–1977) shook viewers and listeners to their cores by embracing the medium of television and employing suggestive dance moves while performing songs written by black artists. At the same time, “Screamin’ Jay” Hawkins (1929–2000) planted the seeds of shock rock with his on stage antics as a voodoo witch doctor and literally screaming the lyrics to his best known song, “I Put a Spell on You” (1956). Themes of demonic intervention and the occult were at the forefront and embraced if for no other reason than spite toward the establishment.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, artists continued to push boundaries by utilizing increased theatrics during live performances. England’s Black Sabbath laid the groundwork for heavy metal with an unmistakable growling guitar tone and incorporating fatalistic or occult topics with tinges of political commentary in their lyrics. KISS embodied the visual aspect of demon musicians by dressing in over-the-top costumes and face paint. Vincent Furnier (b. 1948) adopted the stage persona of “Alice Cooper” and solidified the shock rock genre by elevating the nightmarish aspects of his performances with electric chairs and guillotines. He sings about the reaction of his mother’s church group to his music in “No More Mr. Nice Guy” (1973), where he describes being recognized in church whereupon the

reverend punched him in the nose.

The culture of heavy metal solidified in the mid-1970s, which led to a specific designation of avid listeners called “headbangers,” the familiar devil horns hand signal (*il cornuto*) made famous by Ronnie James Dio (1942–2010), and zombified mascots such as “Eddie” from the British metal band Iron Maiden. During the late 1970s, the Misfits expanded the visual aspects along with increasingly harsh lyrical content through a subset called “horror punk.” “Last Caress” (1979) cataloged messages and fan mail the band received for publication in their fanzine that explored murder and rape.

Shock values have continued to grow steadily through the 1990s and into today’s music market. Female performers are steadily pushing the boundaries of religion-themed performances. Onika Maraj (“Nicki Minaj,” b. 1982), sourced imagery from the film *The Exorcist* (1973) during her 2012 Grammy performance. She also claims multiple stage personalities that include the contrasting personas of pseudo-healer “Nicki Teresa” and “Roman Zolanski,” who emerges as her internalized twin brother. The idea of exorcism is central to Minaj, who uses these various identities to contextualize her performances and deal with her troubled past. Stefani Germanotta (“Lady Gaga,” b. 1986) has also compared her performances to exorcisms to expel internal demons that inspire her dramatic attire and stage presence.

Newcomers and veterans alike follow a trajectory of continued escalation in hopes of staying relevant and visible. Productions have taken on near-Broadway levels of stagecraft, and the tone of the music has become grittier and topically much darker, as found in Marilyn Manson’s *Antichrist Superstar* (2009). The most recent addition to the pantheon of horror rockers is the Swedish metal band Ghost, which emerged in 2010 to wide acclaim. This group, perhaps above most others, ties together many conflicting elements of the sacred and profane into its performances. The music is a blend of liturgy-inspired chant, invoking the names of Lucifer and Beelzebub, and driven by dense guitar and pipe organ textures. Members visually represent the polar opposite of Roman Catholic clergy: five “Nameless Ghouls” in black hooded robes and a central figure dressed as a skull-faced anti-Pope.

Michael Yonchak

See also: Backmasking

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NECHUNG ORACLE

The Nechung Oracle is a special office held by a Tibetan Buddhist monk of Nechung Monastery, located on the outskirts of Lhasa, Tibet. As an oracle, this monk is the spirit medium for the monastery's central protective divinity Dorjé Drakden. Including the current oracle, seventeen mediums are known to have acted as the Nechung Oracle since the 16th century. The Nechung Oracle is the most important of the handful of Tibetan state oracles, having been promoted to this status in the 17th century by the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682). Nechung Monastery itself is located less than a mile from Drepung Monastery, the historical center of the Dalai Lamas' government. This proximity is indicative of Nechung's strong historical connection to the Dalai Lamas and the Tibetan government. As a servant of the state, the Nechung Oracle has provided prophetic advice to the Dalai Lamas in matters of national security and politics and continues to act in this capacity today.

The origins of the Nechung Oracle are uncertain. The oldest architectural stratum of Nechung Monastery was constructed in the late 15th to early 16th century, commissioned as it was by a Drepung abbot to house its central divinity. The earliest reference to the Nechung Oracle concerns a prophecy he is said to have delivered shortly after the death of the Second Dalai Lama (1476–1542). An early 17th-century Mongolian work further details the Nechung Oracle's instrumental involvement in solidifying ties between the Third Dalai Lama (1543–1588) and the Mongolian ruler Altan Khan (1507–1582). However, it is only during the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama that the Nechung Oracle's presence in Tibetan history became more pronounced.

Like previous Dalai Lamas, the Great Fifth—as he is often called—had a connection with the Nechung Oracle and the deity who possesses him. Beginning in 1642, the Fifth Dalai Lama was granted spiritual and temporal rule over Tibet by the Mongolian leader Güshi Khan (1582–1655). The Great Fifth's reliance on the Nechung Oracle increased over the course of his establishing an administration and consolidating his power across Tibet. Several mediums filled the oracle's office in succession during the Fifth Dalai Lama's reign, with some acting as more successful conduits of the

Nechung deity than others. In 1682, the same year as the Fifth Dalai Lama's death, the relationship between the government and the oracle was cemented when Nechung Monastery was fully renovated and expanded under the auspices of the Dalai Lama and his regent Sangyé Gyatso (1653–1705). While there was no precise occasion when the Nechung Oracle was granted the status of state oracle, this architectural expansion solidified the growing bond between the Fifth Dalai Lama and the deity that possesses the oracle. This relationship continued to strengthen during the reign of later Dalai Lamas, especially the 7th, 13th, and the current 14th.

The Nechung Oracle Tokbep Dzepa (Tib. chos skyong chen po Thog 'bebs mdzad pa). This is said to be an image of Śākya Yarpel (Tib. Shakya yar 'phel), who acted as the Nechung Medium from 1856 to 1900; Nechung Monastery Assembly Hall, Lhasa. (Christopher Bell)

In the intervening centuries, the Nechung Oracle's presence in public ceremonies and monastic rituals grew considerably. Throughout the calendar year the oracle would be involved in various religious performances at several different monasteries, going into trance states and blessing lay participants during the occasions. The oracle played an important role in the Tibetan New Year festivities in Lhasa, offering prophecies for the coming year and circumambulating the Jokhang Temple at the city's center. In the fourth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar, the Nechung Oracle would visit Gungtang Monastery southeast of Lhasa and perform a sacred dance in front of the statues of the monastery's central deities. Several times a year the Nechung Oracle would visit Drepung Monastery and offer prophecies to monastic and government officials alike. Most significantly, every 12 years

during the 5th lunar month, the Nechung Oracle would host dozens of other oracles at Nechung Monastery and hold a contest to determine their legitimacy. Since the 1950s these ritual events have ceased to be performed in Tibet, but some continue to be observed in exile.

Regarding the deity who possesses the Nechung Oracle, while the current consensus is that it is a fierce red divinity named Dorjé Drakden, this was not always the case. In 16th- and 17th-century records of the Nechung Oracle's prophecies, the possessing deity often identifies himself as Pehar. It is for this deity that Nechung Monastery was initially constructed. Pehar is often portrayed as a three-headed, six-armed white divinity who acts as the head of a group of five protector deities. Dorjé Drakden is the minister of one of the other four divinities in this group, all of whom are said to have emanated from Pehar. While multiple deities can possess an oracle, even during a single trance session, a textual trend suggests that Dorjé Drakden began possessing the Nechung Oracle far more frequently than Pehar starting in the early 18th century. Since then the association of Dorjé Drakden with the Nechung Oracle has only increased. Despite this deity's meager origins he is now the central protector deity of Nechung Monastery and the main possessing deity of the Nechung Oracle, displacing Pehar's initial primacy. For most Tibetans this distinction is moot since Pehar and Dorjé Drakden are ultimately considered to be one and the same.

In 1959 the current 14th Dalai Lama went into self-imposed exile in India after a failed uprising against Chinese incursion. The Nechung Oracle of that time, Lobzang Jikmé, fled with the Dalai Lama, and the office has been active outside of Tibet ever since. In 1985 a second Nechung Monastery was established in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India, situated within the compound of the Tibetan Government-in-exile. This new monastery is the present home of the Nechung Oracle. The medium Lobzang Jikmé passed away in 1984, and the current Nechung Oracle is Tupten Ngödrup, who was installed in 1987. As in the past, the Nechung Oracle continues to offer important prophetic advice and spiritual encouragement to the 14th Dalai Lama and his cabinet. Beyond his responsibilities to the state, Tupten Ngödrup travels the world giving Buddhist teachings and establishing satellite Nechung centers, several of which now exist in the United States.

Christopher Bell

See also: Tibet

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Related Primary Document: A Prophecy from the Nechung Oracle (Tibetan Buddhist, 17th Century)

The Fifth Dalai Lama unified Tibet in the 17th century and passed away in 1682. It was during the Fifth Dalai Lama's reign that the Nechung Oracle grew to prominence and was promoted to the status of a state oracle. On the occasion of the Dalai Lama's passing, his final regent Sangyé Gyatso consulted the Nechung Oracle for instructions to find the ruler's next incarnation, the Sixth Dalai Lama. The Oracle's response, provided below, demonstrates the prophecy-advice structure of most of the oracle's pronouncements, delivered while in a state of possession. The statement also provides a glimpse into the personality of Pehar, the Nechung Oracle's possessing deity. Pehar refers to himself as an "evil spirit" because he was once a malevolent entity before he was tamed by the Tantric exorcist Padmasambhava and vowed not to harm any sentient being. In his pronouncement, the Nechung Oracle also does not refer to Sangyé Gyatso by -name, but rather by the epithet Man.idhārin. This is the name of one of the attendants -of Avalokites'vara, the bodhisattva of compassion. Just as Man.idhārin is the attendant for the famous bodhisattva, so too is Sangyé Gyatso the attendant for Avalokiteśvara's human incarnation, the Dalai Lama. In the original Tibetan, the statement below is provided in seven poetic stanzas and starts with a prefatory verse preceded by a powerful mantric syllable.

The first part of the Nechung Oracle's proclamation is the prophecy proper, in which the deity predicts that the Fifth Dalai Lama will be reborn in the southeast. In point of fact, the Sixth Dalai Lama was born southeast of Lhasa in the town of Tawang, located in the modern-day Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The second part consists of commands or advice, usually in relation to the prophecy. Along with commissioning paintings and

prescribing prayers, Pehar, through the Nechung Oracle, advises the regent Sangyé Gyatso to recall his grand incarnational herit age as the rebirth of the second Tibetanking Mutri Tsenpo. The oracle recommends that the regent remain positive in the wake of the Fifth Dalai Lama's death so as not to attract baneful influences, and he offers him a protective amulet for his benefit. It merits noting that many of the images the Oracle requested to be painted are still present on the walls of Nechung Monastery today. These paintings include deities and bodhisattvas from Tibetan Buddhism such as the Eight Terrifying Deities, Hayagrīva, and White Tārā. A statue of the Fifth Dalai Lama is also currently present at Nechung, though it is likely newer.

HRIḤ! It is good that you ask me, the evil spirit, [this] question!

The incorporeal spirits are even more tormented [by the Fifth Dalai Lama's passing] than corporeal beings. [Oh] Maṇidhārin, Mutri Tsenpo's reincarnation, the master [the Fifth Dalai Lama] has abandoned his body during your lifetime. Reflect on the flawless teachings of his previous realizations! Maṇidhārin, if [the Fifth Dalai Lama] were to appear elsewhere [outside Tibet], it would greatly harm this incomplete religious and secular government. Although the emanation of the master sheds his skin, the emanation does not fade way. The master's previous successive [incarnations] returned quickly. This benefits the religious and secular government and is due to the power of non-attachment. Recently, [his] radiance has ripened in the southeast. Since there are so many corrupt and unruly beings, they multiply in [just] a day and there are hardships soon after.

Nevertheless, I, the Sovereign Spirit Pehar, promise that [the Dalai Lama] will come quickly without delay! Paint images of the Eight Terrifying Deities, fierce Hayagrīva and Vajrapāṇi, the master himself, as well as White and Green Tārā. For a week the monks of [Drepung Monastery's] Tantric College [should] single-mindedly recite the *Prayer that Spontaneously Fulfills All Wishes* and give offering cakes to the host of incorporeal haughty spirits. Furthermore, because [you] were placed on the master's right side, there is a great necessity for good omens and auspicious portents. In the past [such signs] were established in Tibet by King Mutri Tsenpo, and [you] are his reincarnation in the present. Therefore, do not be bound by sorrow, the iron shackles of ignorance and secrecy. Instead, protect [all] sentient beings by being carefree and cheerful! If you are very depressed it will attract external obstacles. This protective knot has a large sigil on it; it would be

good if you kept it in the middle of your house at all times.

Introduction and translation by Christopher Bell

NEW AGE MOVEMENT

Although the New Age Movement (NAM) rarely uses the terms “exorcism” and “possession,” the idea of spirits inhabiting human bodies in the form of channeling and “walk-ins” is widespread. Like traditions of spirit possession throughout the world, the NAM regards the human personality as consisting of multiple, interchangeable components. For example, NAM writers may speak of receiving messages from a “higher self.” While spirit possession is often regarded as unwanted and demonic in the West, the NAM generally regards spirit possession as either a healing process or a source of wisdom that will guide mankind toward its utopian future.

The historical roots of the NAM have often been overlooked by scholars because of the movement’s emphasis on futurism and aspirations toward bringing about the “New Age.” While use of the term “New Age” became widespread in the 1970s, the movement’s origins go back to the metaphysical movements of the 19th century: Spiritualism, Theosophy, New Thought, and utopian movements. Further, David Gordon Wilson has argued that the New Age’s ideas about spirit possession can be traced past Spiritualism to various forms of shamanism.

Contemporary scholars of the NAM suggest the movement’s defining feature is an experience of transformation. New Agers have either experienced or are diligently seeking a profound personal transformation from an old, unacceptable life to a new exciting future. Steven Sutcliffe suggests that utopian ideals have become privatized such that there has been a move away from expectations of a coming “New Age” and toward the norms and values of a “seeking” individual, created through overlapping social networks and techniques of restoration and healing. Both possession by higher beings and banishing negative or inhibiting presences can be incorporated into a project of personal transformation.

The phenomenon known as channeling evolved from the Spiritualist mediums who would transmit messages from spirits of the dead. Channels purported to receive messages from a wider range of spiritual entities, such as the higher self, enlightened masters, extra-dimensional beings, or extra-

terrestrial “space brothers.” Early channels such as Andrew Jackson Davis (1826–1910) brought their audiences messages from higher beings about how to bring about the utopian ideal in contemporary society and many made pronouncements on the rights of women, ethnic minorities, workers, and animals.

In contrast with spirit mediums, who brought personal messages from the departed, early channels provided less physical evidence for their abilities, and Davis in particular was scathing about mediums who focused on manifestations, especially those who were often subsequently unmasked as frauds. However, as channeling progressed, some forms of evidence were required by skeptical audiences, and it became common for the act of possession to involve a physical change in the channel’s voice or demeanor. Beginning in the mid-20th century, channeling became an influence on the UFO contactee community. Messages from “space brothers” are increasingly presented as more gender neutral or androgynous than that term suggests, leading to droning monotonal voices and stiff, formal postures.

Connecting with these higher beings through channeling also involves becoming a vessel for them, the channel being displaced for the incoming spirit. However, the mind of the channel returns after the message is finished. However, this is not the case with the related phenomenon of walk-ins. A walk-in involves a host’s personality being wholly replaced by the outside spirit. This is regarded as a form of voluntary possession involving a “soul agreement” or a contract made before the host was incarnated in their current life. Walk-ins were first described by Ruth Montgomery in her 1979 book, *Strangers Among Us*, in which she claimed that several famous historical figures had been taken over by other spirits during important events. For example she claimed Jefferson was taken over by spirits who were the actual authors of the Declaration of Independence. Influenced by the work of other Christian psychics such as Edgar Cayce and Jeanne Dixon, Montgomery’s writings restate their prophecy of a coming evolution of mankind leading to a new aeon of peace and light, occurring after a reversal of the Earth’s poles and a cataclysm.

Walk-ins are a part of this process of evolution as the new spirit is a more fully developed being with a spiritual mission to bring about this utopian transition of the world. Also, as the walk-in often occurs after a traumatic experience for the host, this process can also be understood as a form of healing. Even though the initial state for the new spirit is one of

disorientation, once they rediscover their nature as a walk-in and connect with others, they are whole again and ready to complete their missions. Numerous books and websites are now available to guide these souls to their true nature and to complete the healing.

Guides for walk-ins often mention them alongside lightworkers and indigo children. Lightworkers are individuals who are drawn to helping others to evolve spiritually through holistic and healing practices. Indigo children are similar but form a specific generation of individuals born from the early 1980s onwards who have particular psychic skills, social difficulties, and are here to actively break down the harmful paradigms that are blocking mankind's evolution. First described by Nancy Ann Tappe in 1982 in her book *Understanding Your Life through Color*, Indigos are described as part of a chain of generations with different life missions linked to aura colors. Other NAM writers have since described further iterations such as crystals, rainbows, blue rays, diamonds, and many others. Some scholars have described Indigos *as* walk-ins, perhaps because of NAM descriptions of them as souls deciding to be born on earth and actively taking possession of new human bodies for their spiritual missions. However, being born Indigo does not involve the displacement of a prior spirit. Instead, Indigos are understood as a form of embodied channeled message, broadcasting continuously rather than occasionally possessing the channel.

Evil spirits do exist in the NAM in the form of "negative energy" or lower-evolved souls who are described as forbidden from entering into a currently inhabited body. This cardinal rule protects the individual from an involuntary possession but not, however, from the evils of illness or disease, as we can still chose to learn from adversity in this reincarnation or the next. Walk-ins are therefore chosen actively at two different levels: at the level of making the Soul Agreement and at the level of choosing the original trauma that inspired the desire to accept a walk-in. Possession in the NAM is therefore tied up intimately with ideas about free will, choice, and the ascension of mankind to a more evolved, more self-aware level of self-creation and self-determinism.

Beth Singler

See also: Channeling; Otherkin; UFOlogy; Spiritualism

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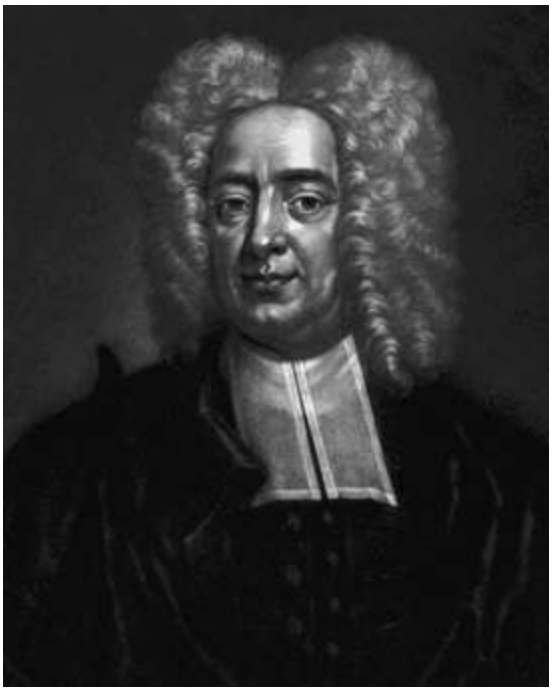
NEW ENGLAND, 17TH CENTURY

There were 78 recorded cases of possession in 17th-century New England. Given the preoccupation of zealous Protestants with the workings of the Devil, it is not surprising that Puritan settlers were fascinated by this phenomenon. They crowded into the houses where demoniacs lived to observe and sympathize, their ministers provided commentary from the pulpit, and literate colonists read accounts of similar incidents taking place elsewhere as well as learned studies on the subject. Ministers were eager to use possession cases as an opportunity to educate their flocks about the issues that they saw as underlying possession. If they became directly involved in guiding the demoniac, this enabled them to promote their own abilities. Although Protestant clergymen denounced the methods used by Catholic exorcists as a form of magic, they had their own repertoire of prayer, fasting, and therapeutic discourse with which to counter and hopefully expel the demonic intruder.



Puritan minister Cotton Mather (1663–1728). Mather's writings on witchcraft and demonology infu-enced the Salem Witch Trials. (Library of Congress)

At the heart of New England's possession cases lay the issue of responsibility for feelings and behavior that the godly defined as sinful. Puritan teaching on this subject was ambiguous and potentially perplexing. Ministers taught that the Devil was a skilled tempter and posed a formidable threat to humankind. Yet they also stressed that he tempted individuals who were already inclined to sin; those who gave in to his advances were driven by their own inner depravity and so fully culpable. Thus, Satan had no power independent of human corruption and, of course, God's will. Some ministers placed more emphasis in their teachings on human responsibility, whereas others magnified the role of Satan. Many church members saw sin as the product of an alliance between self and Satan, but some were inclined either to assume full blame for their sinful impulses or to depict themselves as the Devil's victims. Faced with this range of possibilities, it was not uncommon for individuals to become conflicted over whether to blame themselves or the Devil for their sins. Some of these tormented individuals resolved the issue of culpability, at least temporarily, by convincing themselves and others that they were possessed, thus fusing self and Satan. Instead of accepting or rejecting responsibility for their condition, demoniacs did both: they displaced liability onto the Devil inside them, becoming pitiable victims and

yet simultaneously guilty in having attracted the Devil as potential vessels and recruits. After all, one possible resolution of possession involved the demoniac becoming a witch in Satan's service.

Sixty-seven of New England's demoniacs (86 percent) were female. Although the possessed varied in age from young children to elderly women, most were in their late teens or early 20s. This was, for the most part, an affliction that struck children, young adults, and women. Puritan theology was explicitly gendered in ways that would have inclined women more than men to believe that they were possessed. Ministers taught that women were especially vulnerable to Satan's advances, not because they were by nature more evil, but because they were physically weaker so that the Devil could more easily gain access to their bodies and possess their souls. Women who internalized these assumptions about female susceptibility would have been more likely to think of themselves as fit vessels for the Devil. It is no coincidence that most New England demoniacs were in their late teens or early 20s, when individuals generally attempted conversion. A crucial part of that process involved acknowledging one's sins and need for divine mercy. Some converting individuals sank into crisis because they were obsessed by their sinfulness and unable to navigate their way past the ambiguous messages given them about responsibility for sin. As the settlers' children reached maturity, young women became full church members in disproportionate numbers, perhaps in part because this was the only public distinction open to women. Given their greater interest in attempting conversion, it is not surprising that those who became stymied by the issue of culpability for sin included a disproportionate number of women.

Anthropologists and historians have argued, furthermore, that possession tends to occur among the least powerful segments of a particular society. Those without authority or voice use possession to achieve attention and a form of temporary notoriety. Children, young adults, and women in early New England were expected to be deferential and unobtrusive. Once males reached full adulthood, they would most likely acquire authority as household heads and as participants in public affairs. To a lesser degree the same was true of women who became respected goodwives. But meanwhile some young people, especially young women and in particular those with poor marital prospects, resented their subordinate status, and this was clearly a factor in possession cases. Demoniacs railed against authority figures, disobeyed their parents and insulted their ministers, became violent,

blasphemous, and in other ways violated cultural norms. Most came from devout households and clearly saw their rebellious impulses as sinful. Possession enabled them to blame those impulses on the Devil within them while acknowledging that they were fit vessels for Satan. They were, then, protesting against their place in Puritan society and at the same time labeling such feelings as demonic, simultaneously transgressing and conforming.

Possession was both an individual ordeal and a communal event. Neighbors took an intense interest in such cases, doubtless drawn in part by curiosity and the dramatic spectacle unfolding in their communities. But possession also spoke to fundamental issues that every Puritan had to deal with on a daily basis: the threat posed by Satan's temptations, the inclination of every man and women to sin, and the challenge of allocating blame for illicit thoughts and behavior. The local minister had a daunting opportunity to guide the demoniac through her ordeal and to ensure that his flock learned from the experience. Through prayer, fasting, and conversation, he sought to move her through the crisis, convincing her that embracing the possibility of God's mercy would release her from torment and return her to a more normative engagement with the universal challenge of understanding and governing human frailty.

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See also: Gender; Talbye, Dorothy

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NEW TESTAMENT

Demon possession played a consequential role in early Christian belief and practice. It is likely that the historical Jesus was an exorcist. Contemporaries

remembered him as a miracle-worker who cast out demons, and early Christian communities performed exorcisms of their own. The New Testament Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and Book of Acts place exorcisms at the heart of Jesus and his disciples' healing ministry. None of the other NT writings mention exorcism, but they share elements of the apocalyptic cosmology that underlies these accounts. For the NT authors, supernatural evil pervades the cosmos and affects human beings. The kingdom of Satan is bound up with the established religious and political order. The power of this supernatural evil has begun to wane, however; God will soon set the divine kingdom in its place on earth. Jesus and his disciples' authority over demons manifests this emerging transformation. Thus the significance of Jesus's exorcisms reaches beyond individual healing and salvation. They have insurgent social and political implications.

Jewish ideas about evil spirits and fallen angels did not develop significantly until the last centuries before the Common Era. The Hebrew Bible refers to angelic messengers (e.g., Genesis 18–19; Exodus 3:2) as well as divine spirits that grant military prowess, wisdom, or prophetic inspiration (e.g., Judges 3:10, 6:34; 1 Samuel 10:6, 10–11; 2 Samuel 23:2–3; Isaiah 11:2, 61:1). In some cases, spirits cause prophets to undergo ecstatic divine possession and to receive visions (e.g., Samuel 10:10–11; 19:18–24; 2 Kings 3:15–20; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 2, 37:1-14; Amos 7:1–9). They can also deceive, destroy, or torment human beings (Exodus 12:23; 1 Samuel 16:14–16; 2 Kings 22:19–23). Spirits only act in response to God's bidding, however. For example, the Satan, or opponent, who appears in Numbers 22 opposes Balaam on God's behalf; in Job and Zechariah the Satan serves in an adversarial role in the divine court (Job 1–2; Zechariah 3:1–2).

In the Hellenistic era (320 BCE–30 CE), Jewish thinkers came to adopt a dualistic moral and metaphysical worldview, in the vein of Zoroastrian mythology: evil is personified and locked in a struggle with the good. At the same time, they came to understand God as more transcendent and filled out the space between him and humanity with a host of demons, spirits, and angels. The Septuagint (LXX), the third- to first-century BCE Greek translation of Hebrew Scriptures, uses the Greek term *daimōn* to translate a number of Hebrew words. In Greek culture, *daimōn* connoted individual gods or other spiritual forces, including souls of the dead, which interact with the human world. Greek *daimones* and gods are capricious and can exert a baleful or protective influence. *Daimones* can possess and inspire people, for

example, but can also make them sick. The LXX diverges from this usage and associates it polemically with foreign gods. It serves to characterize the false idols whom gentiles worship (Psalm 95:5; 105:37). The LXX distinguishes demons from angels, divine messengers who look more like the Greek *daimones* and serve as intermediaries between God and humans.

The polemic against Gentile *daimōn*-worship appears in nonbiblical writings from the same period (Jubilees 11:1; 1 Enoch 19). In addition, these works depict angels who rebel against God and malevolent spirits who afflict humans. Especially influential in this regard were adaptations of the first part of the flood narrative in Genesis 6:1–7. In the Genesis account, angels mate with human women and have giant, heroic offspring; the world then falls into wickedness, in response to which God sends the great flood. In the third-century BCE Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36), the angels' disobedient act leads to cosmic ritual impurity, and their children oppress humanity (7:1–6). God commissions good angels to imprison the rebels and purify the earth (10), but the giants' spirits remain to torment human beings until the end of the age (15:36–16:1). Versions of this narrative appear in other texts from the period (e.g., Jubilees 5, 10), which sometimes set rebellious angels and demonic spirits under the leadership of Satanic figures such as "Beliar" and "Mastema," whom God and good angels defeat in final apocalyptic battles (e.g., Jubilees 10; 1QM; Testament of Dan 5).

Accounts of rebellious angels reflect Jewish people's experiences of empire under a succession of non-Judean conquerors. Works from the Hellenistic period link intermediary spirits to the seasons and movement of the stars, but also to the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms. In Daniel, Ben Sira, and the "Animal Apocalypse" of 1 Enoch, each nation is ruled by its own particular angel, while Israel is ruled by Yahweh (Sir 17:17, 1 Enoch 89:59; Daniel 10:13–14). God allows a succession of these nations and angels to prevail, but in the end the divine, universal empire will replace them all. Seers like Enoch and Daniel learn of this future triumph when they rise above the angels to receive knowledge directly from God. This apocalyptic narrative has a critical edge: the secret, divine history and hierarchy of the cosmos reveal that the prevailing worldly powers are not only corrupt but destined to fall. The objects of this critique can be religious or political. The Qumran manuscripts combine apocalyptic dualism with polemics against the Jerusalem Temple establishment, for example.

The NT accounts of demon possession should be understood in light of

this apocalyptic worldview. Paul's letters, the earliest NT writings, mention demons only once (1 Corinthians 10:20). Nevertheless, he imagines a world in the grip of malevolent forces. Satan afflicts human beings (1 Corinthians 5:5, 7:5; 2 Corinthians 2:10–11, 11:14, 12:7) and appears as the "God of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4), beside whom stand the "rulers of this age," "rulers and angels," or "powers" (Romans 8:38–39; 1 Corinthians 2:6–8). Ruling human institutions are tangled up with supernatural evil; both obstruct humanity's direct relationship with God. Paul follows the Septuagint and calls the gentile gods *daimones* (1 Corinthians 10:20; cf. 1 Timothy; Revelation 9:20). In his letter to the Galatians, he characterizes Greek gods as "elemental spirits" (*stoichea*). They appear to be associated with angels who gave the Israelites the law (Galatians 3:19, 4:3, 9). In other passages he grants a degree of spiritual agency to "sin" (Romans 7:5–13, 8:2; 1 Corinthians 15:56).

Elsewhere in the New Testament, Satan tempts or steers human beings astray (e.g., Mark 1:13; Matthew 5:37, 6:13; Luke 13:11, 16; John 13:2, 27; James 4:7). He is the ruler of this world (Luke 4:6; John 12:31) and stands at the head of the demonic kingdom (Mark 3:22–28/Matthew 12:22–29/Luke 11:14–22; Revelation 12:7–9). Worldly conflicts—wars, for example, tensions between religious authorities, or corruption in the temple—are part of the apocalyptic storyline and can involve evil spirits (e.g., Mark 13/Matthew 24:1–44/Luke 21:1–36; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–12; 1 John 4:1–6; Revelation 13:1–8, 16:3–4). The connection between political and spiritual evil is especially clear in Revelation, which identifies Rome as a supernatural antagonist. John's violent fantasy of eschatological battles between demonic and divine forces doubles as a critique of an oppressive political and economic order (Revelation 17—18).

The accounts of possession in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts connect the cosmic drama to concrete experiences of mental and physical sickness. Symptoms of possession can include seizures, deafness, and muteness (Mark 9:32–34/Matthew 12:22–24/Luke 11: 14–15); uncontrolled shouting (Mark 1:23–28/Luke 4:31–37); violent behavior (Acts 19:13–20); and self-harm, isolation, and public nakedness (Mark 5:1–7/Matthew 8:28–34/Luke 8:26–37). John and Mark link possession with madness (John 10:19–21; Mark 3:21); when Jesus exorcises the Gerasene demoniac, it returns him to a "state of sound mind" (*sōphronounta*, Mark 5:15/Luke 8:35). Exorcism is therapeutic, then, but the same mental and physical disorders can appear

independently of demons. Demonic and nondemonic conditions are distinguished by their cause: possession stems from supernatural, Satanic influence (John 13:27; Mark 3:22–30 and parallels; Luke 13:11, 16, 22:3). The underlying state of the possessed individuals is practically incidental to the NT accounts. Possession does not, for example, result from any moral failing or lack of faith. It is a site of apocalyptic struggle between good and evil. In addition to being labeled demons, the possessing spirits are "unclean" (*akathartos*). In the LXX, *akathartos* usually translates the Hebrew *tame* and applies broadly to ritual impurity. When it occurs in Mark, Matthew, and Luke, it only describes demons—ritual defilement occurs at the cosmic, spiritual level, not in the material bodies of possessed individuals.

The spirit of God makes Jesus's exorcisms possible, and they signal the advent of his kingdom (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20). In Luke, when Jesus's disciples cast out demons, Satan falls from heaven (10:18). The language of exorcism mirrors that of apocalyptic triumph. In Luke 10:19 Jesus praises the disciples' "authority to tread upon" (*exousia tou patein epanō*) evil beings just as apocalyptic beasts—symbols of human empires—"trample upon" (*katapatein*, *sympatein*) the earth in the LXX version of Daniel 7 (7:7, 13). In Revelation 12:7–10, the authority (*exousia*) of Satan diminishes as he is "cast down" (*eblēthē*) unto the earth; Jesus is able "to cast out" (*ekballein*) demons only when Satan's *exousia* is limited in Mark 3:22 ff. and parallels. Jesus posits that Satan, the "strong man," must be "bound" before demons can be expelled (3:27). He frames this binding as part of a battle between the kingdoms of God and Satan (3:24–36). The trope of binding later becomes standard in exorcisms. It also features in apocalyptic texts and denotes limitations on the cosmic authority of rebel angels (1 Enoch 10:4–8; Revelation 20:2; Testament of Levi 18:12).

Jesus's exorcisms indicate his messianic identity and extraordinary supernatural authority. Admittedly, he was not the only Jewish exorcist at the time. In the popular story of Tobit, Tobias expels a spirit from his bride (Tobit 6:1–8:3). Josephus relates that an exorcist named Eleazar cast out demons in front of the Emperor Vespasian (*Antiquities* 8:45–49). Mark and Luke mention exorcists who invoked the name of Jesus (Mark 9:38; Acts 19:13–19). But exorcism does not appear to have been widespread in first-century Judaism. Nor do the figures in these accounts claim the same authority as Jesus. They appeal to other divine authorities and sometimes rely on ritual objects; Jesus expels demons with no aid and speaks directly to

them.

Jesus's exorcisms were a source of controversy. Contemporaries would recognize the subversive dimensions of ritual healings that served to bring about a "new kingdom" on earth. Some exorcism narratives include political references. The saying about the binding of the strong man comes from second Isaiah (Isaiah 49:24–25 in the LXX), where it denotes the defeat of Babylon. The demon that inhabits the Gerasene demoniac tells Jesus that its name is "legion" (Mark 5:9 and parallels), a reference to Roman military power. Comparisons between Jesus's exorcisms and those practiced by other colonized people suggest they contested imperial authority, obliquely or directly.

Contemporaries also accused Jesus and John the Baptist of being possessed or mad (John 7:20; 8:48–52; 10:19–21; Mark 3:21; Matthew 11:18/Luke 7:83). Their deviant behavior—John's fasting, Jesus's itinerant miracle-working—invited speculation about their spiritual health. But the accusations also speak to the intrinsic danger of interacting with the spirit world. Mark relates how, after a period of successful exorcisms, Jesus's family became concerned about his mental health; his opponents then accused him of casting out demons through the power of Satan (3:20–22; Matthew 12:24/Luke 11:15). Parallels with other cultures' views on exorcism can shed further light on this accusation. In many traditions, encounters with baleful spiritual forces confer spiritual authority. Exorcists often start their careers by being possessed. In Mark, Jesus's ministry begins after the spirit enters into him at his Baptism and drives him into the wilderness to be tested by Satan (1:10–13)—in Matthew and Luke he is "led by the spirit" into the wilderness to meet the devil (Matthew 4:1/Luke 4:1). The trope of divine possession also appears in Revelation, for example, where John is taken "in the spirit" into the divine throne room (4:2) and into a wilderness where he sees the Whore of Babylon (17:3); Paul claims to have risen to the "third heaven" to receive his revelations (2 Corinthians 12:2–4); the divine spirit also moves downward from God to humans (e.g. Acts 2:1–4, 7:55–56). But in a cosmos populated by ranks of demons and angels, revelation and authority may come from the wrong source. Those who traffic with spirits are prone to possession. Various texts in the NT warn readers to be wary of false revelation and prophets—to "test the spirits," in the language of 1 John (4:1).

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See also: Daimon; Judaism; Tobit, Book of

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ORISHA

Orishas (also spelled *Oricha* or *Orixá*) are African deities worshipped in several Afro-Atlantic religions such as the Cuban Orisha religion (also called Santería and Regla de Ocha), the Brazilian religions Candomblé and Umbanda and the Orisha religion in Trinidad and Tobago. The term derives from the Yoruba language spoken in Nigeria, West Africa. Devotees of Afro-Atlantic religions believe that *orishas* can influence the destiny of human beings. In the religious hierarchy *orishas* are below Oludumare who represents the almighty god, creator of the earth and all human beings but with supernatural power that exceeds any other beings including ancestor spirits.

Orishas are perceived in two ways. On one hand, they are venerated as entities with elaborate personalities and even physical characteristics. They are connected to human activities (healing, warfare, farming, hunting, love, etc.) When enslaved Africans were forbidden from practicing their religion, they represented the *orishas* as Catholic saints, which serve a similar function as intermediators between God and human beings. This adaptation of Catholic iconography (a process known as religious syncretism) was a form of resistance against oppression and regarded as an active possession of the images by African spirits and ancestors. However, since the end of the 20th century syncretism has begun to decline due to a re-Africanization of Afro-Atlantic religions.

Orishas are also described in a metaphysical way as forces of nature that transcend human understanding. In this way *orishas* are perceived as manifestations of Oludumare or personifications of *ashe*, the spiritual force without which nothing can exist. Devotees believe that every human is linked to specific *orishas* and that this connection influences a human being from birth; it forms the character of a person and influences its destiny. This relationship might be hidden until it is revealed during an oracle consultation or until someone experiences uncontrolled manifestation of an *orisha* in one's body. The religious practice is based on the reciprocal relationship between human beings and *orishas*, which is based on exchange of *ashe*.

Devotees can gain *ashe* by fulfilling their obligation to the *orishas*, in particular by offering a sacrifice or by initiation which confirms and strengthens the link.

The pantheon of *orishas* worshiped in Afro-Atlantic religions is smaller than in the Yoruba tradition in Nigeria, as the trans-Atlanic slave trade caused some *orishas* to be lost to tradition. Among the core *orishas* are Yemaya, perceived as personification of motherhood and linked to the ocean in Afro-Atlantic religions; Oshun, goddess of love and linked to sweet water (rivers) in Afro-Atlantic religions; Oya, manifestation of thunder and storm; Ogun, protector of hunters, warriors and nowadays taxi drivers; and Shango, god of fire. Shango, often described as the most popular *orisha* in Afro-Atlantic religions, is perceived as a king of the Oyo kingdom before he became an *orisha*.

A Santería ritual offering a blood sacrifice to the orishas. (Phil Clarke-Hill/In Pictures/Corbis)

A core aspect of Afro-Atlantic religions is the communication between *orishas* and human beings. Priests and priestesses can communicate with the *orishas* on behalf of humans with specific forms of oracle reading. Another means of communication is linked to the belief that *orishas* can “mount” the body of a human devotee. By taking possession of a human body *orishas* can communicate directly to their devotees, though in some Afro-Atlantic

religions they do not speak but communicate indirectly with body language. During the short period of physical existence *orishas* can be addressed directly by the participants of the ceremony and consulted about personal problems.

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See also: Afro-Atlantic Religions; Loa; Umbanda

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OTHERKIN

The term “otherkin” refers to both a community of people who strongly identify as a nonhuman species or being and to individual participants in this community. Most commonly, otherkin identify as supernatural or fantastical creatures found in contemporary Western popular culture such as aliens, vampires, elves, dragons, angels, and demons. “Kintypes” can originate from particular locations, cultures, or texts: for example, the elvish races described by J. R. R. Tolkien in his fictional work who have their own language and society based on Norse, Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon mythology. They may also be more generic; for example, an otherkin may identify as a “nature spirit” and draw from a multitude of legends and popular culture references to convey this concept. Though the experience of being otherkin is typically described in spiritual terms, it is also reported to have physical aspects, such as the sensation of phantom limbs for the body parts their kintype possess but which are absent in the human form, or presenting biological traits of their kintype such as acute sensory abilities and dietary requirements.

While there are a number of popular metaphysical beliefs held in the

otherkin community, there are no overarching doctrines or practices that strictly unite this group. Explanations of how one came to be otherkin are thus varied but include the reincarnation or the transmigration of a nonhuman soul into a physical human body, a genetic link to a nonhuman species, for example, having "angelic DNA," or, less frequently, hosting a spirit or soul that is otherworldly (occasionally referred to as a "walk-in," a term and idea popularized by New Age author Ruth Montgomery in her book *Strangers Among Us*, 1979). However, it is commonly understood in the otherkin community that one has to profoundly believe that their "otherness" originates within, rather than from external sources, to classify as otherkin. This intentionally differentiates this phenomenon from such phenomena as channeling or spirit possession.

The otherkin community has its roots in the fan cultures that developed around seminal high-fantasy works, such as those of Tolkien, in the 1960s and 1970s. In combination with the emerging spiritual marketplace of the era, some fans found religious significance and existential reassurance in identifying not simply with but *as* nonhuman beings. Shared interest in this idea was expressed through mailing lists, gatherings, and representation at spiritual, especially Pagan, festivals. The belief that one is not native to one's body and essentially set apart from other humans can result in feelings of isolation and displacement. When the World Wide Web became available in the early 1990s, it became an invaluable resource for many with alternative religious beliefs for information and social support, with otherkin groups developing rapidly online. Today, the Internet continues to host and maintain the otherkin community, who use personal websites, wikis, blogs, videos, forums, and chat rooms to communicate their experiences to one another and to outsiders.

Venetia Robertson

See also: New Age Movement; Paganism and Witchcraft, Contemporary

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OUIJA BOARD

The Ouija board, also called spirit board, witch board, talking board, "Ask the Glass," or "The Spirit in the Glass" is a tool used to communicate with spirits of the deceased or other supernatural beings. The name "Ouija" was constructed by merging the French word for "yes," *oui*, and the German word for "yes," *ja*. A Ouija board consists of a board marked with the alphabet, the numbers zero through nine, and the words "yes" and "no." Multiple people sit at a table and place their hands on a planchette that is moved around the board to spell messages. While psychologists claim the planchette is moved either consciously or unconsciously by the users, believers claim the movement is caused by spirits. Users can ask questions or have conversations with spirits, who respond by moving the planchette. While the Ouija board is often regarded as an adolescent party game, some Christians claim it is spiritually dangerous and leads to demonic possession.

The modern Ouija board evolved from other means of spirit communication popular during the 19th century, including automatic writing and a practice called "table turning" or "table tipping." Table turning, which may date back to ancient Greece, involved participants sitting in a circle with their hands resting on a table. Questions would be asked to the dead, and it was believed that the spirits would respond by causing the table to turn, tilt, or levitate slightly. Participants might assign codes to these movements so that a spirit could answer questions, such as assigning a "yes" leg and a "no" leg to the table, or asking the spirits make the table knock once for "yes" and twice for "no." During the Spiritualist movement, table turning became popular in both North America and Europe. Table turning could also cause objects to shift across the table, which may have led to the planchette. The word "planchette" originates from the French word *planche*, meaning "plank" or "disc." Mediums were already using planchettes by 1867. Planchettes are often small and triangle shaped with either an arrow on top or a window to indicate which letter they are pointing to. The bottom may have wheels or balls for easy movement.

The first commercial "spirit board" was manufactured by Elijah J. Bond. In 1882, Bond sold the patent to William Fuld who produced and sold it as the *Oriole Talking Board.* Later, Fuld changed the name to Ouija board. Sales

peaked in 1929 at the start of the Great Depression and again 1944 at the height of World War II, when it was used to gain information about loved ones deployed overseas. In 1966 the rights for the Ouija board were bought by Parker Brothers, who sold it as a game. That year, Parker Brothers sold two million Ouija boards in North America. Commercial Ouija boards were not widely available in Europe; however Europeans used homemade versions of the Ouija board called "Ask the Glass" or "The Spirit in the Glass." These versions involve simply writing letters and numbers on a piece of paper and using a household object such as a glass or a ring as a planchette. Other variations on the Ouija board may include "starting point" for the planchette marked with a pentagram.

The Ouija board remains especially popular among adolescents, who may have a sincere curiosity about ghosts and spirits, or may find the danger associated with spirit communication exciting. Catholic Church authorities as well as evangelical Christians have opposed the Ouija board since the early 20th century. Christian critics claim that the spirits are not ghosts but demons and that using the Ouija board is an invitation to demons to infest homes and possess adolescents. A Ouija board appears in the novel and film *The Exorcist*, which reinforced the Ouija board's demonic associations. There are numerous stories and urban legends of possessions and hauntings resulting from experimenting with the Ouija board. However, these warnings often make Ouija boards even more appealing to adolescents. Folklorist Bill Ellis argues that the ritual of using a Ouija board is structurally similar to exorcism in that both practices are regarded as dangerous and involve detecting, engaging with, and dismissing an otherworldly presence.

Sara Duppils

See also: Amorth, Gabriele; Automatic Writing; *Exorcist, The*; Spiritualism

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PAGANISM AND WITCHCRAFT, CONTEMPORARY

Paganism is an umbrella term that includes a variety of religious traditions and practices. Pagan traditions or "Paganisms" tend to be religions of practice oriented toward living in this world and not overly concerned about belief or dogma. Although some are hierarchical and tightly organized, Paganisms are mostly fluid and decentered traditions. Experimentation and cultural remixing is the norm. Although many Pagan traditions do not practice any form of spirit possession, spirit possession is part of many Pagan rituals, notably the Heathen practice of *seidr*, the Witchcraft ritual of Drawing Down the Moon, and many experimental rituals that result in ecstatic experiences.

Spirit possession in Paganism is a sophisticated practice of relating to the other-than-human world. An ethic of respect is at the heart of the relationships that are formed during possession experiences. The experiences are often challenging, transforming the way that Pagans understand their place in the world. The beings with whom Pagans relate include deities, spirits, animals, plants, and environmental features such as mountains and rivers. Most forms of Paganisms are polytheistic. This means that there are many gods who may have competing agendas and place conflicting demands on practitioners. One important challenge for Pagans is to work out which path they are going to follow, as only the individual can decide their path for themselves. As a consequence, it is impossible to identify the one right or correct way of acting—what is right for one person may not be right for another. However, finding one's path is not purely an individual prerogative. Community contexts and relational obligations are taken into account. Possession experiences are an important part of working out these questions. They help practitioners develop respectful ways of relating to the world.

The practice of *seidr*, pronounced "seeth" or "sayth," is common in Heathen traditions, which are based on a recreation of the Norse and Anglo-Saxon practices. *Seidr* is a shamanistic trance practice in which the seer journeys into other realms in order to seek answers to questions asked by members of the community. A *seidr* trance will typically take place as part of a ritual set up for this purpose. Heathens usually meet in small groups of

about a dozen people, although larger meetings do occur. In Heathenry sacred space is created through a mixture of drumming, chanting, the use of incense, dancing, the recitation of prayers to Heathen deities, and various other ritual practices. The designated seer will enter a trance, often covered by a veil while seated. At the appropriate time, advice is dispensed by the seer in response to queries from the other ritual participants. At the conclusion of the rite, food and drink are shared and prayers are said to ensure the return of the seer to the mundane world.

Druids participate in a procession celebrating the Autumn Equinox at Primrose Hill in London. (Brian Parkin/Dreamstime.com)

Heathen seers vary in their descriptions of possession trances. Most Heathen seers report they retain a sense of self-awareness and control over the experience. Some understand themselves as working with and seeking wisdom from the spirits or deities rather than being possessed by them. Others describe an experience that more closely resembles possession in which spiritual forces or beings take partial control of the seer.

Contemporary Witchcraft is the largest subgroup within Paganism. While Witchcraft has many subtraditions itself, Witchcraft rituals are characterized by the creation of sacred space through casting a circle, the celebration of the ritual calendar of the "wheel of the year," veneration of nature-based Pagan deities, and the use of dramatic re-enactment of classical myths. Some subtraditions of Witchcraft may include systematic practices involving

intense ecstatic possession. One common possession ritual found in Witchcraft is the rite of "Drawing Down the Moon." This involves a Priestess going into trance and allowing the Goddess of the moon to enter her. Various invocations are recited as part of the process and the possessed Priestess may then provide some divine wisdom or recite a prayer such as the "Charge of the Goddess" that is commonly used on such occasions.

Possession practices in some other forms of contemporary Paganisms can be more ecstatic and unpredictable. For example, a Pagan named Harrison describes his experience of a "shamanic vision journey." The practice was not part of any formal tradition. Rather, it was part of an eclectic and experimental practice that is common in Paganisms:

> Harrison: Hatty took a group of twenty or so [Pagans] off into a clearing in the forest. We did a shamanic vision journey, guided visualization. We all sat around in this big circle, and one at a time we would get up and dance, and I jumped up and did my [turn]. At first I thought it was just a bit of play-acting, and then this rush of energy hit me, it swept me off my feet. It spun me round and smacked me into the ground, and I thought I was going to die, I had never felt anything like it. This animal just took over. I [shouted] "rroaaarrraaaaggghh!" It was so intense and so physical. It blew me away. That is when I started to realize that magic is about that energy, the transformation of consciousness, rather than just saying the words. (Ezzy 2014: 11)

It is difficult to gauge how common such intensely ecstatic experiences are in the various Pagan traditions. The data on these experiences is limited, and the experiences themselves seem more idiosyncratic and unpredictable. The intensity of ecstatic experiences is likely determined more by the personalities of the ritual group rather than the characteristics of the tradition.

At the heart of Paganism is an ethic of respect that guides how practitioners develop their relationships both with humans and with the other-than-human world. For many Pagans, possession experiences—often in the form of light to medium levels of trance, associated with shamanistic practices in which advice is sought from spirits and gods—play a central role in shaping these relationships.

Douglas Ezzy

See also: New Age Movement; Shamanism

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PAKISTAN

Pakistan's cultural legacy dates back 5,000 years to the Indus Valley Civilization. Although Pakistan's population is predominantly Muslim, it is also home to many religions (Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Christianity), sects, ethnicities, and linguistic groups. This cultural heritage includes many traditions of spirits, possession, and exorcism. Pakistani ideas about the supernatural are rooted in both sacred texts and local folklore. Chapters in the Qur'an and stories about the lives of God's messengers, particularly the prophets Muhammad and Solomon, confirm for Muslims that *jinn*, Satan, and evil spirits are real. Consequently, the possibility of demon possession and black magic exist as well as the need for preventive measures. The tradition of healing and exorcism performed by Muslim saints (called *Sufis* or *pirs*) is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an and is contested by some Pakistani Muslims. However, popular forms of exorcism are widely practiced in rural areas and urban slums. Gallup reports that at least 89 percent of Pakistanis believe in *jinn*; 58 percent in ghosts; 55 percent in fairies, and 50 percent in witches. Belief in such beings is even higher in rural areas. For instance, at least 91 percent of the rural population believes in *jinn* versus 86 percent of the urban population. In Urdu (one of Pakistan's official languages, along with English) the various demons, ghosts, and evil *jinn* are called *bhoot preet*. *Jinn* and demons are believed to occupy dark and deserted areas, graveyards, filthy sites, and tall, dense trees. Those possessed by such beings are described as under *"asar"* (influence) or *"sya"* (shadow), as if something is lurking over them.

A man sits chained by his ankle to a wall in compounds of the Abdullah Shah Ashabi Sufi shrine in Pakistan's Sindh province, where he was brought to be protected by the saint. He is kept chained to prevent him from hitting other people. (Staff/Reuters/Corbis)

It is believed possession can result from a number of causes. One way to become possessed is through a lack of propriety. Those who neglect their religious obligations are believed to be more vulnerable to possession. Evil spirits and *jinn* are also believed to hover over parties and festivals where they lust for those with thick hair, makeup, or perfume. Anyone engaged in dancing, drinking, amorous behavior, or any sort of flamboyance presents an invitation for demonic possession. Accordingly, preventive measures are observed. For example, women are always advised to keep their hair braided and covered instead of leaving it untied. In this way, belief in possession reinforces Pakistan's social mores.

Possession is also believed to occur as a result of black magic (*kala jadu*) and spells (*amal*). Black magic practitioners are thought to be motivated by jealousy and enmity and will cast spells on individuals, families, and even buildings to curse people with possession. Incantations may be placed on someone's flood and drink or over personal items, such as hair, nails, photographs, or even a twig from their garden. The caster has only to inscribe symbols on these objects, mutter over them, or simply blow on them. *Amal*

can also be placed on objects that are secretly buried in buildings.

Pakistani traditions of exorcism (*torr karna / aseb jharna)* include both Muslim prayers for God's intervention and attempts to bargain directly with the possessing entity. Exorcism rituals may be self-performed or involve the help of the family or shrine. Sometimes, possessed individuals can heal themselves by regularly reciting from booklets called *manzil* with prescribed Qur'anic verses. In other cases, family, friends, neighbors, and relatives organize exorcism sessions at home, requesting trained healers to perform a ritual. In the old city of Peshawar, such a gathering of women is called *baithak*, and the ritual experts are similar to a choir who sing religious poetry and play folk musical instruments. In more difficult cases, the possessed is taken to a Sufi shrine to have an exorcism with a saint called a *pir, baba*, or *aamil*. At times the possessed may be tied near the grave of a saint, for example, at the shrine of Hazrat Abdullah Shah Asahabi in Karachi, where shrine attendants can perform an exorcism.

Exorcisms typically feature ritual experts who play music or sing religious poetry about Allah, and the prophets Muhammad and Solomon. Another figure frequently invoked in exorcism poetry is Ghaus-al-Azam Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jillani (1077–1166 CE), a religious scholar from Persia and Baghdad revered as the chief of Sufi saints. He is believed to have had divine powers to see the imperceptible. The exorcist's music facilitates a process called *hazri* in which the evil spirit is "brought out" and forced to "attend" the exorcism. In *hazri*, the patient begins a "dance of the possessed," signaling the spirit's presence. This is a sort of trance state in which the possessed becomes a mouthpiece for the spirit, allowing it to answer the exorcist's questions.

Next the exorcist interrogates the spirit. The first question is to identify the spirit's religious affiliation. This information allows the exorcist to determine which sacred texts will have power over the spirit. Muslim spirits can be exorcised with verses from the Qur'an, Christian spirits with Bible verses, and Hindu spirits with songs to Hindu gods such as Kali Mata, Deva Rani, and Raja Indra. Next, the exorcist asks the spirit its reasons for possession. Sometimes the spirit is reasonable and can be persuaded to leave. In cases of more malevolent demons, the exorcist may beat the possessed to drive the demon out. Such exorcists claim only the demon and not the patient feel the beatings. In addition to music and interrogation, Muslim exorcisms often include elements such as amulets containing Qur'anic verses, holy

water, and special prayers. Sometimes a special charity is performed in which an animal is sacrificed and the meat distributed among the poor—ideally on a Thursday. This is done to beseech divine intervention and the miraculous recovery of the possessed.

Pakistan also features many subcultures with their own traditions of possession and exorcism. The Makranis of Balouchistan and the Sindh are ethnic groups, some of whom can trace their ancestry to the Bantu people of Southeastern Africa. Rituals called *guâti damâli* are performed regularly to rid people of evil spirits. At times these involve several nights of music and dancing to induce a trance state during which a ritual expert can make contact with a spirit and persuade it to leave.

Another ethnic group, the Hunzakut of Hunza in northern Pakistan, claim to be the descendants of Greek soldiers brought to the region by Alexander the Great. Their religious practices combine Islam with a form of indigenous animism. Hunzakut shepherds describe fairy creatures called *pari* who occupy alpine meadows and pastures, where their music can often be heard over the rustle of the juniper trees. *Pari* appear human but are unusually tall with fair skin, red cheeks, and golden hair. Their mouths are wider than a human's, their noses extend high into foreheads, and their feet point backwards. The *pari* seek to possess humans for use as "spokesman" (*bitan*), and it is believed that those who resist their orders go insane.

In recent years medical professionals in Pakistan have raised concerns that mentally ill people are being misdiagnosed with possession, resulting in neglect and abuse. Similarly, national and international media have drawn attention to cases of physical and sexual abuse as well as deception associated with exorcism. In one case, an exorcist told his audience that he was administering holy water that was actually psychiatric medication. Despite these concerns, there is evidence that the exorcisms and healing sessions offered at Sufi shrines are helpful to the populations they serve. It is more affordable to visit an exorcist than a doctor. Additionally, researchers have argued that exorcisms allow supposedly possessed individuals an opportunity to redefine their identity. Through possession, gender, linguistic, ethnic, and religious affiliation can be renegotiated. This is especially valuable in a culture like Pakistan, where behavior is heavily constrained by cultural mores, prescribed gender roles, tribal affiliations, and a lack of economic mobility.

Maleeha Aslam

See also: Islam; Jinn

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PECK, M. SCOTT

Morgan Scott Peck (1936–2005) was an American writer and psychiatrist best known for his 1978 best-seller *The Road Less Traveled*, a self-help book that sold over 10 million copies and spent 13 years on the *New York Times*' best-seller's list. Peck also worked as a self-taught, nondenominational exorcist. Peck was born May 23, 1936, in New York City to David and Elizabeth Peck, both of whom worked in the legal field. Peck was a sensitive young man and spent five weeks in psychiatric hospital at the age of 15 after failing to fit in at the private boarding school where his parents had sent him. This proved to be a formative experience that eventually helped lead Peck to study psychiatry himself after he graduated from Harvard in 1958. He went on to receive his M.D. from Case Western Reserve University in 1963. He practiced psychiatry in the Army for 10 years before opening his own private practice in New Milford, Connecticut.

Peck was one of the first clinicians to write about the connections between psychology and spirituality. He was a spiritual seeker most of his young life—he dabbled in Zen Buddhism, Islamic mysticism, and explored his Jewish heritage, but finally came around to a firm belief in Christianity in his early 40s. Peck never joined a denominational church but rather developed his own brand of Christian spirituality through his explorations of the intersections between psychology and religion.

Mixing Christian theology with clinical observations, Peck wrote on the

reality of human evil and demonic possession. In his 1983 book, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil*, Peck formulates human evil as a psychological concept and potential psychiatric diagnosis, based on his work with individuals who were so deeply ingrained in their negative behaviors that they were beyond psychiatric help. While Peck believed in the devil, he claimed that human evil was not necessarily caused by or a sign of a demonic presence. In Peck's view individuals who were truly possessed were not evil but flawed such that they were more vulnerable to Satan's influence. While the "people of the lie" are fully evil and leave no room for demonic possession, possessed individuals are caught between good and evil and, whether knowingly or not, have made certain choices that attach themselves to a lie in willful defiance of the truth. Free will is central to Peck's conception of Christianity as it is the pivotal driver behind both good and evil in human existence.

Peck's final book, *Glimpses of the Devil* (2005) presents two case studies of women he exorcised to advocate a "scientific" approach to exorcism. Peck's thesis is that exorcism consists of investigating and confronting the lies at the root of the possession and methodically and rationally challenging those lies with pure truth. For Peck, "truth" is the essence of both science and Christianity. Peck died from complications of cancer on September 25, 2005, at the age of 69.

Natalie R. Dollar

See also: Psychological Interpretations

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PENN-LEWIS, JESSIE

Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861–1927) is widely regarded as one of the founders of Pentecostal demonology in the United Kingdom. Born in Neath, South Wales, to middle-class evangelical parents, Penn-Lewis's early life was blighted by physical ill health and spiritual insecurity. She constantly sought

signs of her spiritual election. In 1880 she married William Penn-Lewis, a junior accountant and set up home with him, first in Brighton and then in 1883 in Richmond, Surrey. The early years of her marriage were characterized by an intense involvement in local mission work—Penn Lewis founded the local branch of the Young Women's Christian Association—and a deep concern with the achievement of personal holiness inspired by the Higher Life teachings of Robert Pearsall-Smith and Andrew Murray. Penn-Lewis drew from their writings the idea that sanctification could only be achieved through the death of the worldly self. It involved a form of personal crucifixion, described by Paul in Romans 6, in which the body of sin was destroyed so that one could begin the life eternal. Penn-Lewis experienced this transformation on March 18, 1892, when she had a profound sense of being baptized with the Holy Spirit while on a train carriage drawing into Wimbledon. Thereafter, her life was overcome by the continual invasion of the supernatural.

This episode provided the cornerstone of Penn-Lewis's theology. It was claimed that her physical and psychological health were renewed through the ingress and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Penn-Lewis became an active participant in the Keswick Conventions—a series of international ecumenical prayer meetings organized to encourage and sustain the turn to personal holiness and, inspired by the example of Keswick preachers, began mission work in Sweden (1896), Russia (1897–1903), North America (1900), India (1903), Egypt (1904), Germany (1905), and Finland (1906). In these missions, Penn-Lewis preached the need for the continual overcoming of the self and obedience to the Holy Spirit. According to Mary Garrard, pamphlet essays outlining this "crucicentric" theology (including *The Pathway to Holiness* [1895] and *The Word of the Cross* [1903]) achieved print runs of over one million. Penn-Lewis's emphasis on the pre-eminence of the divine life over the worldly self allowed her to argue, against the long standing Pauline injunction, for the ministry of women. The egalitarian implications of this mystical theology were to be tested, however, in the Welsh Revival of 1904–1905.

The Welsh Revival of 1904–1905 influenced the emerging Pentecostal movement. Led, in part, by a 26-year-old collier turned trainee minister, Evan Roberts (1878–1951) the revival emphasized the need for personal self-surrender and obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Within close communities, where local chapel hierarchies held great power, this message

carried a deeply radical implication. Disenfranchised members of the community, including women and children, were able to cast off their old oppressed identities and claim divine guidance and authority. This claim to direct spiritual authority generated widespread social disruption. During missions to North Wales and Liverpool in 1905, Roberts found himself in direct conflict with the establishments of both church and chapel. It was claimed that the strain of the spiritual mission was bringing about his nervous breakdown. Penn-Lewis encouraged the young missioner to retire to her home in Great Glen, Leicester.

Roberts remained Penn-Lewis's guest for 19 years. During their time together they devoted their energies to intercessory prayer and the production of a new demonology that would allow those seeking personal holiness to distinguish the promptings of the Holy Spirit from selfish desire and satanic influence. They established a "Spiritual Clinic" advising correspondents on how to interrogate and manage spiritual impulses. In 1912, Penn-Lewis and Roberts published *War on the Saints*, a practical handbook that set out to unmask the demonic plan that lay behind Pentecostalism and other new religious movements including Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science. The book drew together demonological ideas from early fundamentalist writers, including George Pember and D. M. Panton, to argue that modern demons were the reawakened spirits of a pre-Adamic race. The sudden resurgence of these entities, sustained by the opportunities provided by Spiritualism and Pentecostalism, marked the realization of the prophecies of Timothy (1 Tim. 4) and Paul (2 Thess. 2:9) that at the end of days men would fall under the sway of deceiving spirits.

Roberts and Penn-Lewis drew upon contemporary physiological and neurological models to claim that these deceiving spirits lodged themselves in the lower nervous centers of the mid-brain and the sympathetic nervous system to obtain control over the unconscious animal life of the individual. Nervous tissue, and the spinal ganglia in particular, provided these parasitic spirits with the flesh they had lost. Recovery could only be accomplished through the cultivation of the will. It was in the restatement of individual personality, a personality that Penn-Lewis and Roberts had once worked so assiduously to overcome, that the possibility of spiritual health now lay. This message was propagated by Penn-Lewis through her publishing house, the Overcomer Press, until her death in 1927. Her works have been kept in print by fundamentalist and millenarian movements, including Marshall

Applewhite's Heaven's Gate group, and remain accessible via the World Wide Web.

Rhodri Hayward

See also: Deliverance Ministry; Pentecostalism; Spiritualism; UFOlogy; Wickland, Carl

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PENTAGON, EXORCISM OF

On October 21, 1967, Allen Ginsberg, Abbie Hoffman, Ed Sanders of the band The Fugs, and other seminal figures of the political "New Left," organized an event called "The Great Exorcism and Levitation of the Pentagon" in protest of the Vietnam War. The exorcism coincided with a much larger protest called "Stop the Draft Week." On the day of the exorcism 35,000 demonstrators marched to the Pentagon, leading to 647 arrests. While most historians have regarded this event as "a put on," some of the participants were serious about the religious and magical significance of the exorcism. The event remains an important case study in what "exorcism" means in modern Western societies.

A key precedent was an angry poem written by Gary Snyder the previous summer entitled "A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon" composed in the summer of 1967. In thinking of imaginative protests, two rival ideas—a ritual to levitate the Pentagon and an exorcism—may have collapsed into a single event.

Poet Allen Ginsberg was a primary participant in the exorcism of the Pentagon in 1967. (AP Photo)

Abbie Hoffman saw the levitation/exorcism as an opportunity to draw media attention to the anti-war movement. He created publicity through a series of media stunts leading up to October 21. He first measured the Pentagon to see how many people would be needed to surround it, resulting in his arrest. Before being escorted off the premises, Hoffman made a formal request for a permit to levitate the Pentagon. Surprisingly, the General Services Administrator granted this request provided that protestors not surround the building and not levitate it higher than three feet. Hoffman also organized a highly-publicized concert in New York in which costumed performers chanted and burned the Pentagon in effigy. This resulted in headlines such as "HIPPIE MAGIC READIED TO DESTROY PENTAGON."

Ed Sanders designed a ritual for the exorcism that was humorous and vulgar but also contained elements of actual occultism. Mimeographs of Sanders's ritual were distributed to protestors, complete with magical formulas written in ancient Greek and Hittite. The ritual consisted of 10 steps including praying for the bad karma of American soldiers, consecrating the four directions, encircling the Pentagon in cornmeal, and the use of a "sacred Grope relic." These preparations were to be followed by the actual "ceremony of exorcism" with ritual steps corresponding to the four elements,

a litany invoking numerous deities, “the rising of the Pentagon,” and something called “the EXORGASM.” The service concluded with a peace mantra.

The actual ritual lasted only 15 minutes and did not follow Sanders’s plan. Many elements that had originally been planned as part of the exorcism —such as the use of cornmeal and a cow painted like the Egyptian goddess of Hathor—were confiscated by authorities. The Fugs performed a chant from a flatbed truck equipped with a gas-powered generator and a canvas backdrop painted with a Day-Glo image of the “Eye of Providence.” Handfuls of colored cornmeal were sprinkled to the four directions. Sanders read from his ritual while the audience chanted, “Out demons! Out!”

The occultist and filmmaker Kenneth Anger was also involved in the exorcism but he disdained the antics of Hoffman and Sanders as silly. During The Fugs’ performance, Anger performed a more sinister ritual beneath the truck that allegedly involved burning an image of the Pentagon along with other materials. Anger later claimed that he successfully infiltrated the Pentagon and left magical talismans in 93 men’s rooms. He explained that this was a magical attack on Mars, the god of war and ruling deity of America.

The Exorcism of the Pentagon had different meanings to different participants. Hoffman regarded it as a media stunt, Anger as a literal magical act, and Sanders as something in between. Allen Ginsberg had been studying Buddhist mantras and had come to believe that reality is socially constructed through language. In this sense, “magic words” are actually the ability to change what things mean. Ginsberg felt that the exorcism had been effective because it demystified the authority of the Pentagon and invited public critique. He notes that four months after the Exorcism, a Gallup poll indicated that 52 percent of Americans opposed the war.

Christopher Cumo

See also: Progressive Politics

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PENTECOSTALISM

Pentecostalism is a movement within Christianity emphasizing the work and role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian believer. Pentecostals understand the actions of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts as available to all Christians who seek the experience. For Pentecostals, the initial evidence of one having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit is generally speaking in tongues, or *glossolalia*. The spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 14 are also central to Pentecostalism. These include tongues, interpretation of tongues, faith, prophecy, healing, miraculous powers, wisdom, knowledge, and discernment of spirits.

Pentecostal theology is sometimes described as a "full gospel" or "four-fold gospel," a term popularized by the 19th-century preacher Albert Benjamin Simpson. It regards Jesus Christ as savior, sanctifier, healer, and soon-coming king. In this sense, Pentecostalism can be thought of as the confluence of four streams of Christian culture. The first stream is the emphasis on salvation through faith in Christ accompanied by an emotional and transformative experience. This concept, sometimes referred to as new birth, dates back to the mid-18th-century American revival known as the Great Awakening. The second stream, Christ as sanctifier, has three tributaries. The first tributary started in 18th-century England with John Wesley's concept of entire sanctification, in which Christians may become free from original sin and achieve a state of "holiness." Wesley founded the denomination known as Methodism and his ideas about sanctification inspired a broader trend in Christianity known as the "holiness movement." In the mid-19th century, American "holiness Wesleyans," led by evangelist Phoebe Palmer, came to believe that entire sanctification is not a process so much as a state of faith that one enters at a particular moment in time. In this state, sometimes called the "second blessing," Christians can rise above the power of sin. Another tributary came from the teachings of Charles G. Finney, president of Oberlin College, and other Reformed writers. The "Oberlin perfectionists" taught a definable post-conversion, life-transforming experience. However, they understood this transformation as an ongoing process in which one can consecrate their life wholly to the service of Christ. The third tributary came from the "higher life" conferences in Keswick, England. They taught that a series of experiences, referred to as "an enduement of power," equipped the believer for witness and service to Christ. The third stream is divine healing, and the fourth is the anticipation of the

return of Christ, both of which are described in the New Testament.

The contemporary origins of Pentecostalism have been traced to a Methodist pastor named Charles Fox Parham. In October 1900 Parham started an informal Bible school for Christian workers in Topeka, Kansas. The school emphasized intensive Bible study in a spiritual environment in order to become an effective witness of Christ. On top of Bible study, prayer was placed in a high priority. The school featured a prayer tower where a continuous prayer vigil occurred. It was here that his student, Agnes Ozman, reportedly spoke Chinese for three days after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Before leaving for a series of meeting in Kansas City, Parham gave his entire class an assignment to look for evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit in scripture, and he recommended the Book of Acts. When he returned on December 31, 1900, he found that his students were having a variety of ecstatic experiences. Each of them had experienced speaking in tongues. Due to this occurrence, they concluded that speaking in tongues should be the evidence of one having received the baptism in the Spirit. Later, it was claimed that the students spoke in over 20 known languages. According to Parham, none of the students had studied these languages, and native speakers confirmed them as authentic.

In 1905, Parham moved his headquarters to Houston, Texas, where he opened another Bible school. It was here that William Joseph Seymour received his theological training. Seymour was an African American who already held holiness views before attending Parham's school. Seymour sat in the hallway to hear Parham's lectures through an open door because it was not legal for blacks to sit in the classroom with whites. He listened for several months, and learned that the holiness movement's teaching was wrong when they equated sanctification with baptism with the Holy Spirit. Whereas sanctification cleansed original sin, baptism with the Holy Spirit brought power for service. Seymour accepted Parham's teachings, although while in Houston he never experienced speaking in tongues.

Seymour went to Los Angeles to pastor a holiness congregation, but when he taught of separate experience beyond sanctification for the purpose of empowering, he lost his position. This, however, did not stop Seymour. He began a prayer meeting and held Bible studies in a private home located on Bonnie Brae Street. On April 9, 1906, Seymour's group experienced a revival and began speaking and singing in tongues. The group relocated to a building on Azusa Street. As word spread of healings and other miraculous events at

Azusa Street, people came from all over the city, the country, and across the world. Approximately 1,500 people came each day, and meetings ran round the clock. As people returned home, they spread the message of the occurrences at Azusa Street. In addition to tongues, other gifts such as interpretation, words of knowledge and wisdom, healing, and exorcism of demons were reported to have been present. Seymour started *The Apostolic Faith*, a monthly newspaper that reported on outbreaks of speaking in tongues, healings, prophecies, and visions that were taking place in other locations.

This event, known as "the Azusa street revival," is commonly regarded as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement. People had previously spoken in tongues in the United States; however the Azusa street revival brought the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced in speaking in tongues to the attention of the world. Scores of Pentecostal denominations developed as a result of this event.

While speaking in tongues is the spiritual gift that is most commonly associated with Pentecostalism, this is not the only one. Pentecostals have generally approved of visions, dreams, trances, dancing and other physical gyrations, loud singing and shouting, and prolonged periods of prayer. These, however, must be done through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, personal conversion stories, or testimonies, were important to early Pentecostals. They assumed that their personal faith stories were models for others to follow, so they spent much time in their services sharing testimonies of their spiritual journeys.

Eschatology, or anticipation of Christ's return, also played a key role in Pentecostalism, and heavy emphasis was given to describing eternal torment and hell. There was a sense of urgency, for the return of Christ could occur at any minute. Pentecostals modified the theology known as dispensational premillennialism, which holds that true Christians will be taken to heaven in an event known as "The Rapture," which will be followed by a period of tribulation preceding the second coming of Christ. Pentecostals claimed that only those who had been baptized of the Holy Spirit would be taken up in the Rapture. Another change concerned the belief that Christ would not return until the full gospel message had been heard by the whole world. For Pentecostals, the full gospel included salvation, healing, and baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. A third alteration involved the understanding of the period of time between the Day of

Pentecost and the present. They understood the Day of Pentecost to be the "early rain," and the ones that took place during their time as the "latter rain."

Many early Pentecostal groups resisted organization beyond the local congregation, but denominations still formed. There were reports of Wesleyan sects in the Southeast that embraced the Pentecostal message. An example of these groups is the predominantly black Church of God in Christ, which was led by C. H. Mason. The Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee, led by A. J. Tomlinson also embraced Pentecostalism, as well as the Pentecostal Holiness Church, led by J. H. King.

The Pentecostal message also found its place among those from a Reformed background from the central and south-central states, particularly Baptists and Presbyterians. The Assemblies of God was formed in 1914, and in the 1920s evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson left that denomination to form her own in Los Angeles. In 1927 the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel was started.

A dispute arose in the Assemblies of God in 1916 over the nature of the Trinity. There were some who held that God was one rather than triune and fully revealed in Jesus Christ. The result of the controversy was that several "Oneness" organizations were formed, while the Assemblies of God was Trinitarian. Some Oneness denominations include the mostly white United Pentecostal Church and the mostly black Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

With the formation of denominations and the numerical growth, Pentecostals gained social respectability. There were more than 200 distinct Pentecostal sects in America by the end of the 20th century. The two largest, the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ, each claimed millions of members. Claiming hundreds of thousands apiece were the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, the United Pentecostal Church, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, and the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. While precise numbers are difficult to ascertain, there are an estimated 10 million Pentecostal followers in the United States alone.

Not only have Pentecostals increased in numbers, but they have also increased in social status. Healing evangelist Oral Roberts was judged one of the 10 most influential religious leaders in the United States by the magazine *Christian Century* in 1978. William J. Seymour was ranked one of the 10 most influential Christians of the 20th century by *Christian History* magazine

two decades later. At the beginning of the new millennium the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Vern Clark, and U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft publicly identified as Pentecostals.

In 1901, there were only a handful of people who identified as Pentecostals. The number steadily increased, and by the beginning of the 21st century they have become the largest family of Protestants in the world. There are more than 200 million members who can be designated as "denominational Pentecostals." They have surpassed the Orthodox churches and have become the second largest Christian denomination. Only the Roman Catholics exceed Pentecostals in number. Pentecostalism has seen its greatest growth in the Southern Hemisphere, particularly in Africa and Latin America. In Latin America, Pentecostalism is one of the fastest growing Christian movements. When the amount of Charismatics present in mainline denominations and nondenominational churches are added, the number exceeds more than 500 million people. With that growth, some historians have referred to the 20th century as the "Pentecostal century."

Yvette D. Garcia

See also: Charismatic Christianity; Glossolalia; Holy Spirit; New Testament; Penn-Lewis, Jessie; Xenoglossy

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PERRON, ROGER AND CAROLYN

The Perron Family of Harrisville, Rhode Island, claimed that a frightening set of experiences involving spirit entities began in 1971 and lasted a decade. Demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren became involved in the case, and

connected the paranormal manifestations to a malevolent spirit connected to witchcraft and Satanism in earthly life. The experiences of the Perron Family became the basis for a box office–record-breaking horror film, *The Conjuring* (2013).

Roger and Carolyn Perron moved into the 18th-century, 14-room farmhouse in Rhode Island on a 200-acre property in 1971 with their five daughters: Andrea, Nancy, Christine, Cynthia, and April. Subsequently, the Perrons allegedly experienced various phenomena such as doors slamming shut, apparitions, and voices telling the family to leave.

The unusual experiences came to the attention of a Rhode Island paranormal group in 1974, and they invited Ed and Lorraine Warren to investigate. The Warrens concluded that the house was host to the presence of multiple spirits, some benign and others malevolent. Lorraine Warren said that the source of the negative experiences for the family was the spirit of Bathsheba Sherman. According to Lorraine, Sherman had been a witch and Satanist who murdered her daughter as a sacrifice to Lucifer in 1863 (in keeping with Christian mythology of the witch as Satan's consort). Sherman later hanged herself, and due to her connection to the property she was haunting the home. Historical research identifies Sherman, but few details about her life can be confirmed. Historians do know she died of old age rather than by her own hand. Only the Warrens's claims tie Sherman to the house and make the claim of witchcraft and Satanism.

As a part of the investigative process Lorraine Warren conducted a séance. This allegedly resulted in the temporary possession of Carolyn Perron by Sherman. The Perrons moved out of the home in 1980. Andrea Perron claims that others who have lived in the house after the Perron Family also experienced strange phenomena. The current owners, Gerry and Norma Sutcliffe, have presented conflicting reports on their experiences, at times claiming to have encountered paranormal phenomena, and at other times claiming nothing and opining that the Perron haunting was a hoax.

In 2013 the experiences of the Perrons became the basis for a horror film, *The Conjuring*, directed by James Wan. The Perron Family supported the film and assisted Wan as consultants. Lorraine Warren also served Wan in this capacity and had a cameo in the film. As a "based in fact" horror film, *The Conjuring* opened at number one at the box office on its release, and set a record for box office for an R-rated horror film on its opening weekend. It did so well financially that a sequel is planned. Andrea Perron has written

two volumes of a planned trilogy about the Perron Family experiences entitled *House of Darkness House of Light*.

John W. Morehead

See also: Film; Warren, Ed and Lorraine

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PIGS IN THE PARLOR

Pigs in the Parlor: A Practical Guide to Deliverance is a book on demonology and exorcism written by the charismatic Baptist couple Frank and Ida Mae Hammond. Since its publication in 1973, it has been one of the most influential texts in America for the deliverance ministry movement. It has sold over a million copies and gone through numerous printings. It has also been translated into other languages, including Spanish and Vietnamese. The Hammond's demonology is significant for two reasons. First, they describe how an individual may not be fully possessed but still have "indwelling demons." Accordingly, many people may need deliverance ministry even if they show no signs of possession. Second, *Pigs in the Parlor* features an exhaustive list of demons that attributes almost every physical, mental, and emotional problem imaginable to the presence of indwelling demons. There are demons for sins such as murder and rape, negative emotions such as anger or stubbornness, physical ailments such as arthritis and diabetes, and demons of "false religions," which include all religions other than Christianity. The effect of this demonology is that nearly any aspect of a person can be interpreted as an indwelling demon. The demons are organized into 53 "groupings," each of which is led by a "strong man" or "ruling spirit." For example, the demons of lust, homosexuality, incest, and frigidity, are all part of the same grouping led by the demon of sexual impurity. For Christians who believe in deliverance ministry, *Pigs in the Parlor* is appealing because it provides an organized system that can be applied to almost anything. The Hammonds produced many more books on deliverance ministry, including the *Handbook for Children's Deliverance*

(1996). In 2011, Impact Christian books also produced a *Pigs in the Parlor* study guide for churches that offer classes in deliverance ministry.

Joseph P. Laycock

See also: Deliverance Ministry

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POSSESSED OBJECTS

Many cultures that believe in spirit possession believe that spirits can inhabit physical objects as well as people and places. In many parts of the world, objects containing spirits are part of ordinary religious life. In Polynesia, a supernatural force known as *mana* is thought to reside in special people and special objects, much like a spirit. In Japanese Shinto, gods and spirits (*kami*) are thought to reside within special objects such as swords, mirrors, or special "spirits houses" built for them. In the traditional religion of Congo basin, special objects called *nkisi* are thought to contain spirits. Other cultures believe that objects may become possessed by spirits of the dead, especially if the person was near the object at the moment of death. Finally, many cultures use objects to trap or control unwanted or demonic spirits.

This *dybbuk* box is a reputedly haunted or possessed wine cabinet. It is currently owned by Jason Haxton and has been encased in a blessed arc (seen in photograph). Missouri, 2007. (Jason Haxton, M.A.)

Western attitudes toward possessed objects are largely negative, reflecting the Jewish and Christian condemnation of "idolatry," or the worship of objects. The term "fetish" was first coined by European traders in the 16th and 17th centuries to demonize the use of sacred objects in Western African religion. When Western religions do identify objects as containing spirits, the spirits are usually thought to be demonic. For instance, the original version of the Catholic *Rituale Romanum* contains exorcisms to remove demons from salt and water.

Western folklore is replete with stories of possessed objects causing hauntings in homes where they are kept. Phenomena associated with possessed objects include apparitions, voices, raps, "sensing a presence," objects ending up in unexpected places (known as "apporting" in Spiritualist literature), and physical sensations (pushes, pinches, scratching, etc.). In 2001, Kevin Mannis of Portland, Oregon, sold an antique wine cabinet on the online auction site eBay. The cabinet was allegedly a "dybbuk box," that trapped the spirit of a *dybbuk*—a possessing entity from Jewish folklore. The box changed hands several times, reportedly causing hauntings for everyone who possessed it. The story was adapted into the 2012 film *The Possession*.

eBay currently maintains a buying guide for purchasing "haunted and possessed" objects.

There are also numerous stories of dolls and other toys being possessed by malevolent spirits. The story of "Annabelle," an allegedly haunted Raggedy Ann doll, was made famous by paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren. In 1970, a nursing student received an antique doll from her mother. When the doll exhibited strange behavior, a medium was contacted who revealed that the doll was possessed by a dead woman named "Annabelle Higgins." The students took compassion for the spirit and granted permission to reside in the doll. However, when frightening incidents continued to occur, they contacted the Warrens, who declared that "Annabelle Higgins" was actually a demon. The doll currently resides in the Warren Occult Museum in Monroe, Connecticut. Around the same time, a story emerged about "Robert," a doll allegedly given to Robert Eugene Otto of Key West, Florida, in 1906 by a Caribbean woman skilled in black magic. The doll allegedly moved by itself and exhibited other disturbing behavior. Robert is currently on exhibit in Key West's Fort East Martello Museum and Gardens. The story of Robert was likely the inspiration for the "Child's Play" horror films (1988–2013), featuring "Chucky," a doll possessed by the spirit of a murderer known as the Lakeshore strangler as the result of a "voodoo" ritual.

Sara Duppils

See also: Dybbuk; Incantation Bowls; Warren, Ed and Lorraine

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PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

In Western culture, exorcism is often associated with conservative religion and politics. However, since the 1960s, the "New Left" has used the language of exorcism to protest on behalf of progressive causes. Such protests frame military and corporate powers as demonic and employ a variety prayers, chanting, and rituals to exorcise their power. Often, these exorcisms are meant neither figuratively nor literally, but somewhere in between.

Allen Ginsberg was a pioneer of this approach. His 1956 poem "Howl" compared industrial civilization to Moloch, a Canaanite god mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and associated with child sacrifice. Later, Ginsberg's study of Buddhist mantras (sacred chants) led him to conclude that language shapes how people understand reality. Therefore, words can be transformative and "magical" if used properly. In 1966, Ginsberg wrote his poem "Wichita Vortex Sutra" in protest of the Vietnam War. This poem takes the form of a magical spell in which Ginsberg invokes various Buddhist and Hindu beings, along with Jesus and Allah, to declare the war ended. In September 1967, Ginsberg's poem "Pentagon Exorcism" incorporated a Sanskrit mantra used to repel *rakshas* (demons). This exorcism calls the Pentagon to "apocatostasis"—the reconciliation of good and evil. A month later, Ginsberg's magical/linguistic approach to the peace movement was employed in the collective attempt to levitate and exorcise the Pentagon. In 1968, Ginsberg, along with the leftist band The Fugs, performed an exorcism at the grave of conservative senator Joseph McCarthy in Appleton, Wisconsin. This was a short ceremony that involved leaving various benevolent objects on the senator's grave—flowers, a candy bar, a stuffed animal, and so on.

Ginsberg's work has been continued by the poet and activist Anne Waldman. Her poem "Spel against Specious Ones" is a curse against corrupt corporate and political forces, banishing them to hell and out "the kingdom of poetry and music." It too employs mantras against *rakshas*. The final clause states that the curse is partially reversible if the wrong-doers recognize their dark ways. The anarchist poet Hakim Bey has also encouraged the use of magical "curses" to counter institutions he considers to be evil. He prescribed a form of protest called the "Malay Black Djinn Curse," in which pseudo-magical objects are mailed to various institutions with a notice that the recipient has been cursed.

The progressive Pagan leader Starhawk has likewise used magical techniques to banish evil at various protest sites including the Lawrence

Livermore weapons labs, Vadenberg Air Force Base, and the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant. At the 1999 protest of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, Washington, Starhawk organized a ritual that involved melting an ice sculpture. The melting ice symbolized the dissolving power of the WTO.

The progressive Christian theologian Walter Wink also regarded corporate and military institutions as the "principalities and powers" that Christians are called to fight against (Ephesians 6:12). In a series of books on fighting "the powers," Wink rejected the notion that political, economic, and cultural forces could be separated from spiritual ones and argued that spiritual warfare means fighting for social justice.

Joseph P. Laycock

See also: Blumhardt, Christoph Friedrich; Pentagon, Exorcism of

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PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Psychologists and medical professionals generally assume that spirits do not exist and that "spirit possession" is actually a naturally occurring state of "dissociation," in which an individual experiences a breakdown of their awareness, memory, identity, or perceptions. Other symptoms associated with spirit possession, such as convulsions, are likewise assumed to have natural causes that originate in either the body or the mind. Psychologists have proposed that possessed people are actually suffering from a variety of disorders such as epilepsy, dissociative identity disorder (multiple-personality disorder), schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and Tourette's syndrome. Other explanations have included ergotism or toxins that the possessed has consumed either unknowingly or as part of a medicinal or magical practice. Psychoanalysts have suggested that spirit possession originates entirely in the mind and that demons and spirits are actually manifestations of impulses and desires that the possessed person has

subconsciously suppressed. More recent psychological interpretations of possession and exorcism caution against explanations that ignore the role of culture. “Psychosocial” interpretations regard possession and exorcism as phenomena that have both psychological and social origins. With this turn toward social theories of the mind, some medical experts have challenged the assumption that everyone who experiences possession is necessarily unhealthy. Instead, it has been suggested that possession and exorcism may contribute to psychological health in cultures where these phenomena are common.

While many cultures posit supernatural causes for mental illness, there have long been physicians who are skeptical of supernatural diagnoses. In the fourth century BCE, the Greek physician Hippocrates wrote his treatise *The Sacred Disease*, arguing that diseases such as epilepsy have a natural cause and are not caused by gods or spirits. Johann Weyer was a 16th-century German physician who is sometimes regarded as one of the fathers of psychiatry. In 1545 he served as municipal doctor for the town of Amhem where he handled a case of mass possession. Weyer was the first person to describe accused witches as mentally ill. Although he did not deny the existence of demons, his writings condemned witch trials and attributed the signs of possession and witchcraft to natural causes.

With the Enlightenment, the intellectual classes became increasingly certain that possession was caused by mental illness. By the mid-19th century it was widely accepted by medical professionals that possession was actually a mental illness called “hysteria.” Hysteria was a poorly defined diagnosis that could be applied to a wide range of behavior. It was almost always diagnosed in women and defined chiefly by becoming excessively excited or emotional. Modern psychology has replaced hysteria with other diagnoses, including conversion disorder. The leading proponent of the hysteria diagnosis in the 19th century was the French neurologist Jean-Marin Charcot. With his student Pierre Janet, Charcot studied European accounts of possession as undiagnosed cases of hysteria. Charcot coined the term “hysterical arch” (*arc de cercle*) to describe a posture in which both possessed individuals and hysterical patients would bend backwards, placing their heads near their feet. Charcot employed several techniques to treat hysteria, including hypnosis.

In 1896 the Harvard psychologist William James delivered a series of lectures on exceptional mental states for the Lowell Institute, one of which

was entitled “Demoniacal Possession.” James was interested in the Spiritualist movement then underway in America and saw connections between Spiritualism and Biblical accounts of demonic possession. He expressed that he did not dismiss the reality of demons out of hand but felt there was insufficient evidence to support such a conclusion. James described “hystero-demonopathy” as a mental disorder that was distinct from both hysteria and multiple-personality disorder. He regarded it as a state of altered consciousness that was influenced by suggestion and cultural beliefs. He suggested that society has become more optimistic since Biblical times and that this is why Spiritualist mediums experienced possession as helpful rather than demonic or frightening. James’s attention to culture predicted modern psychosocial models of possession. However, James also suggested that possession has a biological component. He proposed that communities with particularly large outbreaks of demonic possession may suffer from inbreeding, producing a population more prone to mental illness.

Charcot’s most famous student was Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis. Freud had a longstanding interest in demons and witchcraft and regarded encounters with such beings as fantasies brought on by repressed desires. In 1922, he wrote his essay, “A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis,” which psychoanalyzed a historical account of possession and exorcism that occurred to a Bavarian painter named Christoph Haizmann in the 1670s. Haizmann arrived at the monastery of Mariazell suffering from seizures. He explained that he had signed a pact with the devil in which he promised his soul for nine years of work as a painter. His contract had nearly run out, and now the devil was coming for his soul. After Haizmann offered penance, the monks performed an exorcism, and the devil arrived to forfeit Haizmann’s contract. But months later Haizmann’s symptoms recurred, and he returned to the monastery, explaining that he had also signed a second contract with the devil. This matter was also resolved, and Haizmann become a monk. Freud interpreted Haizman’s supernatural experiences as a “neurotic fantasy.” He made much of the fact that Haizmann’s father had died shortly before his troubles started and theorized that he had imagined the devil as a “father-substitute.” The devil’s frightening appearance reflected Haizmann’s repressed anger toward his father. Through his experiences, Haizmann found a new “family” to care for him by joining a monastery. Psychiatrists have used Freud’s psychoanalytical approach to interpret patients who claim to be possessed as recently as the 1970s.

Freud's student Carl Jung was also interested in possession and theorized that possession occurred when an individual came to identify with "a complex" from the subconscious. While Freud believed subconscious impulses were personal and often sexual in nature, Jung believed in a "collective unconscious" that affects all human beings because of their shared biology and culture. For Jung, the gods, spirits, and demons that have appeared to people throughout history were actually aspects of this collective unconscious that he called "archetypes." As people mature and undergo a process of "individuation," they experience an evolving relationship with the archetypes. If this relationship breaks down, the individual may come to believe that they are an archetype, resulting in possession. Psychotherapy could be used to cure such people by adjusting their relationship with the archetype. In a series of interviews in the 1930s, Jung described Hitler as "possessed" by the collective archetype of the Aryan unconscious. Some of Jung's lesser-known writings such as "Seven Sermons to the Dead" reflect his own encounters with the archetypes. These writings are cryptic and mystical. They resemble automatic writing in that Jung felt he was not entirely responsible for writing them.

By the mid-20th century, neuroscience had become increasingly sophisticated, leading medical experts to search for a neurological basis for spirit possession. This approach tends to assume possession occurs only in brains that are diseased or deficient. For instance, the "deprivation hypothesis" suggests that possession is more common in impoverished areas such as Haiti because famine and malnourishment prevents the population's brains from forming properly, thus leading to temporary mental impairments that are interpreted as the influence of spirits. So far, neurological interpretations of possession and exorcism are mostly speculative as it is difficult and potentially unethical to study the brains of people in a state of possession. Some scientists have proposed using electroencephalography (EEG) to measure the brain-states of possessed people. Other proposals have included the use of superconducting quantum interference devices (SQUIDs) during ceremonies that involve spirit possession. SQUIDs measure tiny changes in electromagnetic fields and, in theory, could reveal something about brain states during possession. Blood testing could also be used to look for chemical differences between someone in a normal and possessed state.

Another direction of research into the causes of possession is the shift toward psychosocial models. Unlike neurological theories, psychosocial

theories are less likely to assume that spirit possession represents a mental defect. In the 1960s, physician and medical historian George Rosen suggested that the individual and the social must be examined side by side and that people who believe in possession cannot be dismissed as pathological or irrational. Psychologist Nicholas Spanos promoted what he called a "sociocognitive" theory of possession. Spanos argued that possession is a learned pattern of response and that possessed people are enacting social roles. Possessed individuals either learn from their culture how possessed people are expected to act, or they may be coaxed into acting a certain way by an exorcist. During exorcisms, possessed individuals respond to certain cues such as the presentation of religious objects in culturally prescribed ways. This does not mean that possessed people are necessarily "faking" possession. Rather, psychosocial models of possession propose that personalities are strongly shaped by social environment and that some people can exhibit an alternate personality when their culture provides the means to do so.

Spirit possession is still widely regarded by medical experts as a mental illness. The *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems*, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) issued a diagnostic category for "Trance and Possession Disorders." Anthropologists such as Michael Taussig have suggested that "medicalizing" possession as insanity has aided Western imperialism by framing the supernatural beliefs of indigenous cultures as a disease that Western colonizers must cure. As the West comes to better understand the beliefs of other cultures, some medical professionals have shifted their attitudes toward possession. E. Mansell Pattison, a psychiatrist who consulted with the Public Service Clinic serving the Yakima Indian reservation, suggested that mental health professionals should learn more about the supernatural beliefs of their patients and explore ways to integrate psychotherapy with traditional practices such as exorcism. He describes a case in which a Native American girl was exhibiting abnormal behavior that she and her family attributed to hostile ghosts. Although Pattison interpreted the ghosts as projections of sexual rivalry between the girl and her mother, he did not feel it would be helpful to share this interpretation with his patients. Instead, he prescribed a traditional exorcism ceremony rather than psychotherapy, and this proved effective. Pattison concluded that exorcism functions as a form of psychotherapy and, conversely, that psychotherapy is the Western world's version of exorcism, that is, a ritual with prescribed roles

that works primarily because the participants believe that it will work.

Christopher Cumo

See also: Conversion Disorder; Dissociative Identity Disorder; Ergotism

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QUAKERISM

Quakerism, also referred to as the Religious Society of Friends, is a Christian religious sect that developed in the mid-17th century during the English Revolution (1640–1660). The adherents of this religion are popularly referred to as "Friends" or "Quakers." The latter appellation initially emerged as a derogatory term but was shortly appropriated and continues to be employed in the present day. Quakerism stresses the individual's personal relationship with God, which in turn allows the individual to receive direct revelations. This notion of direct revelation is related to the Quaker concept of "Inner Light" or the "Light of Christ." This light speaks to all individuals and provides them with direction on embracing a virtuous lifestyle and becoming "Children of the Light." In response to the power of the light, the early Quakers physically convulsed, a possible origin of the popular appellation Quakers. The individual receipt of direct revelation and the guidance provided by the Inner Light removes the need for a clerical hierarchy and instead has instituted a "priesthood of all believers." This reliance on direct revelation originally produced a unique form of worship. Instead of ornate, intricate, and regulated liturgies, Quakerism traditionally held simple "meetings" where the faithful silently sit and wait for some sort of divine inspiration to share with the group. These teachings and rituals trace their origins to the father of the faith.

The central founding figure of Quakerism is the Englishman George Fox (1624–1691). At the age of 19, Fox departed from his home and family and embarked on a spiritual journey. In 1652, Fox experienced one of his most famous spiritual visions on Pendle Hill in the English county of Lancashire. In this vision, Fox witnessed a multitude of people dressed in white clothing coming to Jesus Christ. This spiritual event prompted Fox to establish a new religious community. In the same year, Fox managed to gain the support of Margaret Fell (1614–1702), one of the most prominent early leaders of the Quaker movement. In addition to Fell's embracing of Quakerism, Fox was able to secure permission from Fell's husband to allow the early Quakers to gather in his country estate, Swarthmoor Hall. This prominent country manor

became the center of the early Quaker movement. The movement started to attract attention largely because of its controversial teachings but also due to the mystical presence that surrounded its founder. In several instances, Fox was remanded to jail for a host of perceived religious offenses. Some of the first Quakers walked or ran naked in public in imitation of the Hebrew prophets. In 1653, several Lancashire judges and ministers prepared a petition claiming that worshippers at Quaker meetings fall to the ground, roar, and foam at the mouth. Fox did not refute these charges but defended the Quaker style of worship. In one instance while in prison, Fox encountered a woman that was mentally disturbed and seemingly possessed by a demon. Once released, Fox and his coreligionists performed an exorcism that drove the demon from the possessed woman's body. This reputation not only spread throughout the English countryside, but more importantly helped in spreading Quakerism to the various continents of the world, including other parts of Europe, North America, South America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. By 1664, the religious ecstasy of early Quaker worship had given way the traditional meeting style.

Founder of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and critic of the Anglican Church of 17th-century England, George Fox revolutionized the Christian faith by emphasizing a universal spiritual faith of nonviolence, social reform, gender equality, and Christ's continual revelation in each person. (Library of Congress)

There are just over 377,000 Quakers scattered throughout the world, with the largest portion of adherents living in Africa, particularly the east African nation of Kenya, which has the largest number of Quakers per country in the world. The United States also has a sizable Quaker community with almost 77,000 members living in the country. After over 350 years of existence, Quakerism has fragmented into several different subgroups or branches. Today, there are three major branches of Quakerism, namely Conservative, Liberal, and Evangelical. The Conservative branch appears to be the smallest of the three and fully embraces unprogrammed worship along with traditional values and practices. The Liberal branch shares some key characteristics with their Conservative counterparts but takes more progressive and pluralistic stances on certain issues. Finally, the Evangelical branch significantly outnumbers the other two branches and appears to be the most diverse. Its predominance can largely be attributed to the formidable missionary activity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Those subscribing to the Evangelical branch emphasize their Christian heritage over their Quaker heritage. Their worship is more aligned with traditional Christian services, relying on a pastor, emphasizing scripture, and incorporating elements of "programmed worship." In contrast to unprogrammed worship, programmed worship comprises various different forms of religious expression. Although these three branches have some noticeable differences, they all share several, common tenets.

In reference to an ethical and moral perspective, Quakerism has four "testimonies" or overarching tenets that regulate Quaker life. These four "testimonies" include honesty, equality, plainness, and peace or pacifism. The latter testimony is not only a hallmark of the faith, but has garnered Quakerism much attention. There remains a debate as to how this testimony should be implemented in modern life. For some Quakers, it is impermissible to enlist in the military, pay taxes that fund military campaigns, or support aggressive foreign policies. However, this strict pacifist approach has not been adopted by the entire Quaker world community. In addition to these four testimonies, Quaker behavior is regulated by "books of discipline" that are published by the different branches and periodically revised at annual meetings. The stereotypical image of the Quaker dressed in dark, conservative clothing and employing "thee" and "thou" in everyday speech has essentially become extinct. The future of Quakerism will likely continue to maintain its Quaker heritage and practices but will also continue to evolve

with modern society.

John Cappucci

See also: Charismatic Christianity; Holiness Movement; Holy Spirit; Pentecostalism

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RAMSEY, BILL

Bill Ramsey gained notoriety in the early 1980s in London with violent outbursts that the noted demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren would attribute to a "werewolf demon," and skeptics to the psychopathological delusion of Clinical Lycanthropy. Ramsey reported having strange experiences as a nine-year-old child, including the feeling of sudden drops in temperature, smelling foul odors, violent outbursts, and "animal like behavior." As an adult he continued to have strange experiences and feelings of violence, which he tried to hide for many years.

Ramsey eventually felt compelled to bite others. After experiencing severe pain, Ramsey went to Southend Hospital in 1983 where he bit a nurse and damaged the emergency room. In another instance Ramsey picked up a prostitute and brought her to the Southend police station. He asked to be locked up but then attacked the woman and several police officers in a violent rage. The officers involved reported that Ramsey seemed to have unusual strength and exhibited unnatural behavior. In subsequent interviews, one of the officers attacked by Ramsey reported that he declared the devil was inside him and made him strong. Eventually, Ramsey was committed to a mental hospital for psychiatric tests but was released after 28 days.

Ramsey's case was covered in the media where he became known as the "Werewolf of London." The story went global and came to the attention of demonologist Lorraine Warren, who urged her fellow paranormal investigator and husband Ed into traveling to London to research the Ramsey case. Previously the Warrens had extensive experience in demonology and the paranormal but had not explored experiences connected to folklore and horror fiction such as werewolves or vampires.

The Warrens examined Ramsey and determined that his affliction was due to possession by a "werewolf demon." Ramsey was taken to the United States, and Bishop Robert McKenna, a Dominican from Connecticut, performed an exorcism. Subsequently, Ramsey returned to England and claimed no further violent episodes.

John W. Morehead

See also: Psychological Interpretations; Warren, Ed and Lorraine

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RITUALE ROMANUM

The *Rituale Romanum* (Latin, "Roman Ritual"), among the most important liturgical books of the Roman Catholic Church, contains those rituals, beyond the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, normally celebrated by priests: sacraments, processions, exorcism, funeral rites, and other blessings or sacramentals. Although the Ritual itself may stand as a monument to the constancy of Roman Catholic ceremony over the centuries, the evolution of exorcism in the Ritual reflects shifting attitudes on the relationship between evil and the material.

The Roman Ritual is a product of the early modern Catholic reform codified by the Council of Trent (1545–63). In the early Middle Ages, the texts and directives (rubrics) for priestly rituals often circulated in short pamphlets (*libella*) but were later commonly gathered into collections within a single codex, itself known as a "ritual"; these, however, were among the last and least uniform of the medieval liturgical books to develop. In the years following Trent, attempts were made at Rome to create a standardized collection of priestly rituals; the most important was that by Giulio Antonio Cardinal Santorio (1586), which became a major source for the *Rituale Romanum*. Finally promulgated by Pope Paul V in 1614, the Ritual was occasionally corrected and frequently expanded but developed "organically," its medieval source material preserved largely intact, up through its 1952 typical edition. By the mid-20th century, the Ritual was usually divided into about a dozen titles, one of which was the rite for exorcism of individuals possessed by demons.

Among the most significant decisions of the landmark Second Vatican Council (or "Vatican II," 1962–1965) was a call to revise the rites of the Catholic Church with the aim that they meet the circumstances and needs of modern times. Completed over the course of three decades, these revisions

were extensive. This revised, post-Conciliar *Rituale Romanum* exists more in name than in practice; its various titles have been printed in individual volumes or various collections, but no single work contains all the titles of the revised Ritual.

The word “exorcism” derives from the Greek *exorkizo*, “to adjure or exhort”; the word is attested in Christian use as early as Acts 19:13. An exorcism is any exhortation addressed to a demon. Although an entire title of the *Rituale* was dedicated to a solemn rite for the exorcism of individuals possessed by demons, exorcisms can be found throughout the *Rituale*. Since the first centuries of Christian history, candidates for baptism have undergone exorcisms; also in the early Church, the water and oils used in baptism and other sacraments could be prepared with prayers for their effectiveness in giving health and in driving away demons. Exorcisms were commonly performed for Christians seeking reconciliation through the ancient order of penitents.

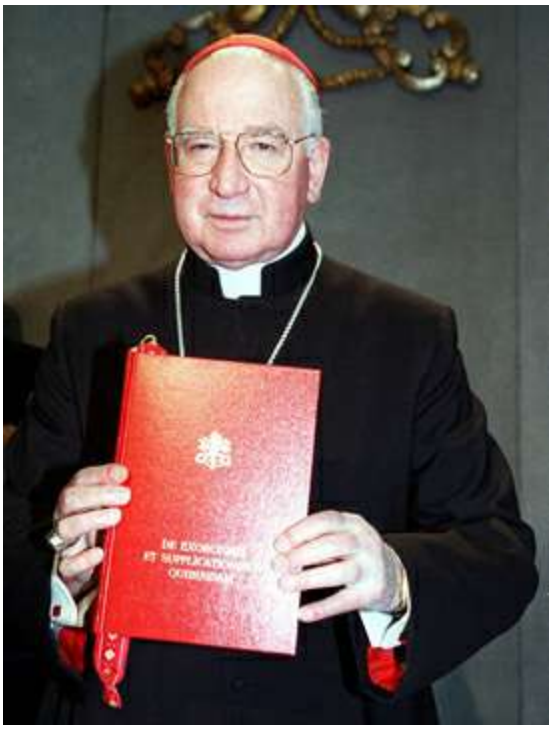
With the dawn of the Middle Ages and the conversion of Germanic, Celtic, and Slavic peoples to Christianity, material objects became frequent subjects of exorcism as Christians sought more tangible ways of mediating the divine-human relationship. Now, items used in divine worship were prepared by a preliminary exorcism for cleansing from demonic power and a subsequent blessing for the invocation of divine power; this practice marks a change from earlier prayers that the objects used in Christian worship be effective in expelling demons from the *people* who used them. Blessings of water, salt, and oil and the consecration of churches, church bells, altars, and sacred vessels in the 1952 Ritual included exorcisms of the objects themselves.

The post-Vatican II revision of the Ritual overseen by Annibale Bugnini was guided by principles that included the avoidance of any appearance of superstition, a more properly “liturgical” restructuring of all rites, and an emphasis on the human person—rather than any physical thing—as the primary object of ritual. Thus, the revision retained the various exorcisms that related directly to persons (e.g., of candidates for baptism), emphasizing the deliverance of the recipient from the influence of sin but also of the devil, but abrogated exorcisms relating to objects (e.g., of salt or sacred vessels). Once again, the mediation of the divine-human relationship is cast in personalist terms, though the early Christian attentiveness to the influence of demons is somewhat overshadowed by a modern emphasis on the influence of the

effects of personal sin.

Although the *Rituale Romanum* envisions a wide use of exorcisms for individuals and (as discussed above) objects, it also includes a "solemn" exorcism of those possessed by demons. Canon law stipulates that exorcisms of the possessed be performed by priests known for piety, knowledge, prudence, and integrity, and then only with the "special and express" permission of their superior (can. 1172). Care is taken to avoid proposing exorcism as a solution for psychological disorders.

Largely based on medieval material, the rite for the exorcism of the possessed contained in the original 1614 Ritual contained two innovations in the Catholic practice of exorcism: it placed the prayers of exorcism in a more cohesive liturgical framework, and it included a celebrated guide to assist priests in identifying the signs of demonic possession. Historians such as Brian Levack have suggested that such structured rituals and guides provided not only the exorcist but also the possessed with a sort of "script" to follow in the procession of exorcism, clearly delineating the expectations for each. The exorcism of the possessed described by the 1952 Ritual begins, after appropriate preparations by the exorcist, with a sign of the cross, the sprinkling of holy water, a litany, and prayers followed by the *Praecipio tibi*, in which the exorcist directly addresses the demon, demanding that it reveal both its name and the length of time it has possessed its victim ("energumen") before forbidding it from causing any harm as the rite progresses. The exorcist then repeats, as often as deemed necessary, a cycle of three prayers addressed to God, each followed by a formula of exorcism addressed to Satan and to the particular demonic spirit possessing the subject of the exorcism. The prayers and exhortations of this cycle are the oldest part of the rite, attested in manuscripts dating to the ninth century. Additional prayers, creeds, and psalms followed, and the exorcism concluded with a short prayer (collect) celebrating the liberation of the possessed. This is exorcism as indelibly impressed upon popular imagination by movies such as *The Exorcist* (1973)—though Augustine gives an account of an exorcism 1,500 years earlier similar in its surreal grotesqueness.



Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez of Chile, holds the book *De Exorcismis et Supplicationibus Quibusdam* (Of Exorcisms and Certain Supplications), the Vatican's updated guidelines on exorcism, presented during a news conference at the Vatican. The 1999 guidelines, written in Latin, update the last set written in 1614. (AP Photo/Marco Ravagli)

The exorcism of the possessed was the final part of the Ritual to be revised following Vatican II, not promulgated until 1999. Following the general principles for the Ritual's revision articulated above, the revised rite for exorcism is more deprecatory, ecclesial, and liturgical in form. It offers a choice of exorcism formulae, three in the traditional "imprecatory" form (commands addressed to the demon, exhorting it to depart), but also three that are "deprecatory" (petitions for relief addressed to God). All imprecatory formulae are optional, and, in fact, the entire ritual may be celebrated without any address to demons. If the former rite pitted the exorcist in lone combat against the demon, the revised ritual is more "ecclesial," presenting exorcism as the action of the whole Church by employing in the first person plural and supplying instructions for the participation of congregants. Finally, the revised rite fits a 20th-century understanding of proper liturgical form dominated by *anamnesis* (remembrance) and *epiclesis* (invocation): the revised ritual emphasizes the renewal of the subject's baptismal dedication to God more than the exorcist's defeat of the evil spirit.

The 1999 revision was controversial. The very publication of a reformed

rite was deemed by some observers as an attempt to restore lost medieval piety. Leading liturgical reformers lauded the modern character of the revision even as it was derided by popular exorcist Gabriele Amorth and criticized by some theologians. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (later Benedict XVI) secured permission for exorcists to continue use of the earlier 1952 *Rituale*.

Twentieth-century editions of the *Rituale* prior to Vatican II also contained a short exorcism *In satanam et angelos apostaticos*, an exorcism evidently taken from the rite for blessing Epiphany water but given its own structure by Leo XIII in 1890. Preceded by a prayer to the Archangel Michael, the exorcism called upon Satan to cease his deception of the human race and to desist from harming the Catholic Church or hindering its freedom, before concluding with a short prayer for deliverance from the bondage or deception of all demonic spirits. Intended for the exorcism not of a specific person but rather of an entire locality (e.g., a city or parish), this last exorcism reflects the pressure placed upon Church hierarchy by growing anti-clerical movements in some European countries and calls for the disestablishment of the Church from public life.

Andrew Benjamin Salzmann

See also: Amorth, Gabriele; Catholicism; International Association of Exorcists; Michael the Archangel

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RÛAḤ

The Hebrew noun *rûaḥ*, often translated "spirit," has a wide range of meanings and occurs frequently throughout the Jewish Tanakh/Christian Old Testament. These meanings include "breath" (see Gen. 6:17; Isa. 40:7), the more meteorological "wind" (see Gen. 8:1; Num. 11:31), human character (see Deut. 34:9; Prov. 16:32; Hos. 4:12), and the human mind (see Ezek. 11:5). The biblical texts also indicate that the Israelite God has a *rûaḥ*, speaking of both the "spirit of the LORD" and the "spirit of God." Throughout the biblical texts this divine spirit interacts with humans in varying ways, from equipping them with military prowess, giving them the gift of prophecy, signaling divine favor, or otherwise impacting their behavior. Sometimes the divine spirit works in a positive manner. For instance, Isaiah 11:2 describes how the "spirit of the LORD" will rest on the ideal king and impart a spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, and might, as well as of knowledge and fear of the LORD. Similarly, throughout the book of Judges the "spirit of the LORD" is depicted as empowering the divinely chosen military leaders and granting them success in battle and/or great physical strength (see Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). Frequently the divine spirit is associated with the prophets (see Mi. 3:7-8; Isa. 48:16; 61:1; Ezek. 2:2; 11:5; 37), and some texts associate the spirit with wisdom (see Exod. 31:3; Isa. 11:2; Job 27:2–5). Only two places refer explicitly to a "holy spirit" (Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:10–11). Alternatively, sometimes the spirit associated with the deity functions negatively or as an agent of disaster. In both the stories of Abimelech (Judg. 9:23) and Saul (1 Sam. 16:14–23; 18:10; 19:9), the texts describe how a *rûaḥ ra'ah*, or an "evil spirit," associated with the deity impacts the events that follow. Similarly, in the story found in 1 Kings 22, God puts a "lying spirit" in the mouths of the false prophets in order to demonstrate that Micaiah ben Imlah is a true prophet. Although later interpretations will understand the *rûaḥ ra'ah* as a demon, in the biblical texts these "evil spirits" are not personified or depicted as independent beings, but are rather part of—or at least controlled by—God, demonstrating how in the biblical worldview the deity rules all things.

Kelly J. Murphy

See also: Abimelech; Holy Spirit; Judaism; Saul

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S

SANTO DAIME

Santo Daime was founded in the 1930s by Raimundo Irineu Serra (1892–1971) in the Brazilian Amazonian state of Acre. Known as “Master Irineu,” Irineu Serra is believed to be the reincarnation of Jesus. Although various branches of Santo Daime have emerged since the death of its founder, the largest and most widespread is that of Cefluris (Eclectic Centre of the Universal Flowing Light Raimundo Irineu Serra). Cefluris was founded by Sebastião Mota de Melo (1920–1990) who is known by his followers as “Padrinho Sebastião” and held to be the reincarnation of John the Baptist. Today, Cefluris is led by Alfredo Gregório de Melo (son of Padrinho Sebastião) and Alex Polari, who are regarded as the respective reincarnations of Solomon and David. Thanks mainly to the international spread of Cefluris from the 1980s, Santo Daime is now present across the American continent, in many of Europe’s capitals and in the most urban-industrialized regions of Australasia.

As practiced by Cefluris, Santo Daime is an amalgam of beliefs and practices drawn from popular Catholic, indigenous, esoteric, Spiritist, Afro-Brazilian, and new religious sources. Appropriated from indigenous sources, the psychoactive substance “ayahuasca” is used in most Santo Daime rituals and acts as an entheogen that facilitates interaction with spiritual agents or supernatural forces. Spirit possession is a controversial topic in Santo Daime, with some branches denying its legitimacy within “the doctrine.” For Cefluris, however, spirit mediumship (known popularly as “incorporation”) has always been an integral part of Santo Daime ritual practice. Reflecting its highly eclectic character, members of Cefluris incorporate a wide variety of spiritual entities. Within Brazil, most of these entities are appropriated from Brazilian Spiritism and Afro-Brazilian traditions such as Candomblé and Umbanda. While Spiritist and Afro-Brazilian entities are incorporated in other parts of the world, they are increasingly complemented by supernatural agencies drawn from religious contexts of an indigenous (e.g., Native American and Australasian aboriginal), traditional (e.g., Christianity and Hinduism), and nonmainstream (e.g., Paganism and extraterrestrialism)

nature.

The ritual incorporation of spirits within Santo Daime is as diverse as the entities themselves. Spirit mediumship is the most popular form of ritualized possession and commonly involves engagement with the disincarnate spirits of human beings in need of counseling and orientation. Whereas such counseling and orientation may be privately undertaken by individual ritual participants, interactive forms of mediumship also occur by way of experienced mediums working with those involuntarily possessed or acting in tandem with other trained mediums. "Charitable" acts of mediumship, in which disoriented spirits are helped on their way, are increasingly being complemented by other forms of ritualized spirit possession that merge both traditional (e.g., Afro-Brazilian and indigenous) and nontraditional (e.g., neoshamanic and esoteric) motifs. Reflecting the typically experiential, expressive, and experimental preoccupations of contemporary nonmainstream spiritualities, Santo Daime rituals across the world are including a progressively diverse array of spiritual entities (e.g., animal spirits, archangels, ascended masters, extra-terrestrials, *orixás*) drawn from an increasingly broad range of contemporary and historical sources.

Andrew Dawson

See also: Brazil; UFOlogy; Umbanda

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SAUL

Saul is a figure from the Jewish Tanakh/Christian Old Testament whose story largely appears in the book of Samuel. In short, the book of Samuel contains competing tales about how Saul became king (1 Sam. 9–11), various stories about why God removes Saul from power (1 Sam. 13–15), and a focus on the conflict between Saul and David, who will take Saul's place as king of Israel (1 Sam. 16–2 Sam. 1). Woven throughout the story of Saul is the theme of

spirit possession, with variations on the idea that a spirit from God impacts Saul's actions either positively (the spirit of the LORD/God in 1 Sam. 10:6; 10:10; 11:6) or negatively (an evil spirit from, of, or sent by the LORD/God in 1 Sam. 16:14–16, 23; 18:10; 19:9). According to the biblical text, God chose Saul to be the first divinely designated king of Israel. However, this designation is based solely on the biblical description; there is no extra-biblical evidence for Saul or Saul's reign. If in fact Saul was a historical figure, his reign would date sometime around 1000 BCE.

The presence of the divine spirit in the story of Saul highlights that Saul's success and failure as a ruler is intricately linked to his relationship with God. In the first instance, the prophet Samuel foretells how a spirit of the LORD will possess Saul, resulting in a prophetic frenzy that will make Saul become like a different man (1 Sam. 10:6; 11:6). Subsequently, the spirit of God possesses Saul (1 Sam. 10:10). In these ways, Saul's actions align with what is known about ancient Near Eastern prophets, who often experienced trances or other forms of unusual behavior when possessed. As Saul's story continues, the texts illustrate how the biblical writers link the presence of the divine spirit with divine favor or disfavor: when the deity's spirit comes upon David and marks him as the newly chosen king, it subsequently departs from Saul and is replaced with an evil spirit that instead torments him (1 Sam. 16:13–14), and a divinely sent evil spirit continues to plague him (1 Sam. 16:15–17, 23). The connection between God and the evil spirit is underscored when only David—upon whom the divine spirit/favor now rests—can soothe Saul by playing his lyre. At other times the evil spirit comes upon Saul while David is playing, and Saul is so troubled that he attacks David (1 Sam. 18:10; 19:9). Although the initial spirit possessions in 1 Sam. 10:10 and 11:6 mark Saul as divinely favored, in all of the latter cases the spirit troubles Saul, causing him suffering. At the beginning of Saul's reign, the presence of the divine spirit indicates Saul's divinely chosen status (1 Sam 10:6–13; 11:6), while at the end it marks him as unsuitable to be king (1 Sam 19:18–24).

In the story of Saul, the divine spirit illustrates how the ancient Israelites understood God as controlling both this world and any supernatural elements that might exist beyond and/or in this world. The theme of spirit possession repeatedly emphasizes that the Israelite deity is in control of otherworldly spirits that might be understood as troubling humans—and also that God sometimes used them to impact human actions, behavior, and well-being. In the numerous references to spirit possession in the story of Saul, the presence

of the divine spirit sets off a chain of events that results in Saul's eventual downfall and David's successful rise to power.

Kelly J. Murphy

See also: Abimelech; Holy Spirit; Judaism; Rûaḥ

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SHAMANISM

"Shaman" originated as a word used by the Tungus language-speaking Evenk people of Siberia. Since its first mention in writings by European travelers and scholars in the 18th century, the word has been used as a way of labeling people or roles in many other places. Understandings of its meaning among the Evenk and its applications elsewhere vary so much that it is difficult to present a precise or universally applicable definition. Sometimes shaman is taken to emphasize "inner" experiences such as dramatically altered states of consciousness, curious experiences or beliefs, or even psychoses. However, the term can also be used to refer to ritual experts who perform specific functions for their wider communities. Exactly what these functions might be is debated.

In addition to differences of opinion arising from focusing attention on either experiential or performative issues, confusion can arise from the fact that a term referring to specific people ("shaman") has been elaborated into one referring to a cultural or religious system ("shamanism"). It is, for example, questionable whether the Evenk or any other nation is (now or in the past) properly identified as "shamanic" or as "believing in shamanism" just because they employ people who might be called shamans. Recent research has employed the term "animism" to encapsulate the nature of the broader cultures in which shamans are deemed necessary. This points to ideas about a larger-than-human community in which fraught relationships (e.g., of

interspecies predation and consumption) require mediation and careful etiquette. As if this arena of speculation and conflicting word-use was not difficult enough, things are yet more interesting when we ask about the relationship between shamans and possession.

One of the most influential interpreters of shamanism, Mircea Eliade, insisted that shamans are not possessed. Indeed, in his definition of shamanism, shamans must learn to control or master "spirits" rather than to be possessed by them. Possession might be something that they help other people against, either by healing them by exorcising the spirits or by guarding against the aggression of such beings. Luc de Heusch, a Belgian anthropologist, followed this line of argument by encapsulating shamanism as "the ascent of man [sic] to the gods" as opposed to the "descent of the gods onto (and into) man." In both situations metaphysical entities may be thought to be involved. But in the works of Eliade and de Heusch, the defining characteristic of the shaman (as a role or as an individual) is the ability to achieve ecstatic altered states of consciousness, or trance, and ascend into the "world above" this one in order to achieve significant results. These might be to gain healing for the wider community, knowledge of the whereabouts of prey animals in order to guide hunters to success, or power to combat aggressors (from this-world or the lower-world). Because these interpreters assumed that possession involves a loss of control, they concluded that it would contradict the efforts of shamans.

The value of this contrast between shamanism and possession is itself undermined by the lack of clarity about putative differences between shamanic trance or ecstasy and the kind of possession invited by mediums. Another anthropologist, Ioan Lewis, drew attention to considerable similarities between mediums and shamans, especially in the ways in which both invite "spirits" to enter their bodies and to guide, inspire, or inform them. The idea that shamans "journey" outside of their bodies (as the term "ecstasy" or "standing outside of oneself" might imply) is interesting but does not contradict reports by shamans that "spirits" come to them, enter them, and act through them to benefit others. Conversely, despite claims that when mediums are in trance they are completely unaware of what happens in their bodies (i.e., that they become unconscious while deities take complete control), evidence strongly suggests more than a residual awareness of other people or of objects such as fires nearby. Considerable care is needed in interpreting attempts to explain unusual experiences and activities, and it

seems likely that mistakes have been made by scholars who want to fix on simple explanations of complex, poetic, or allusive discourses.

A female shaman from northwestern California, poses for a portrait wearing shell headbands, necklace, and holding two baskets, ca. 1923. (Library of Congress)

The term “spirit” can generate confusion in these contexts. Despite giving an appearance of meaningfully referring to particular entities encountered by shamans and thereby helping us to understand the relations between shamans and possession, “spirits” is notoriously vague. In different cultures people speak of many different beings with whom shamans engage. “Spirits” can unhelpfully suggest not only that these are all alike but also that they are not physical or observable. However, one of the chief tasks of shamans in northern Asia, Amazonia, and elsewhere is to mediate between their human community and the wider, other-than-human community. They might converse with animals, birds, or plants to gain benefits as varied as food, medicine, knowledge, or the reconciliation of divergent interests. For example, shamans may approach bears to request permission for hunters to take lives, or to apologize if a previous hunt involved unintended disrespect. Sometimes shamans address the otherworldly “owners of animals” rather than specific animals; nonetheless, they do so to gain tangible benefits. But if the beings with whom shamans relate are not “spirits” (in a strong “spiritual”

sense), how is it useful to talk about possession?

In addition to contributing to understanding the diversity of "possession" phenomena, studying the acts and ideas of shamans adds to the value of widening the use of the term. Beyond emphasizing the "inner" experiential aspects of possession, we might attend to performative and relational questions. Shamans might be called on to heal others who have been "dispossessed" of some aspect of themselves (a way of interpreting both mental and physical ailments). They may do so by utilizing abilities (gained from more powerful or controlling beings of some kind) to delocate from their bodies to seek power to act helpfully. Shamans also possess degrees of social (especially gendered) power to help less powerful human clients because they work with more powerful beings.

Graham Harvey

See also: Korean Shamanism; Mongolia

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SHAVER MYSTERY

The Shaver Mystery is the term used to describe theories arising from the writings of author and artist Richard Shaver, primarily concerning the dero, an evil species of beings, descended from the inhabitants of the lost continent of Lemuria, that dwell in underground caverns and torment surface dwellers. Shaver first learned of the dero while working in an automotive plant in 1932, when he heard voices that he initially believed were coming from his welding gun. He concluded that the mysterious voices heard by those society considers insane are in fact the result of the dero's efforts to disrupt the surface world. His ideas, which have been widely disseminated in New Age

circles, can be seen as modern reinterpretation of Medieval ideas about demonic possession.

Though Shaver gave the Shaver Mystery its name, the true architect of the phenomenon was Ray Palmer, the editor of the science fiction magazine *Amazing Stories*. In 1944, Palmer published a letter that Shaver had sent to *Amazing*, detailing the "Mantong Alphabet"—an interpretation of the alphabet that he claimed formed the true root of all language. Shaver, encouraged by the publication of his letter, sent *Amazing* a rambling 10,000-word manuscript entitled "A Warning to Future Man." The manuscript explained that some 12,000 years ago, most of the inhabitants of the doomed continent of Lemuria left Earth to escape the harmful effects of solar radiation. Those they left behind, the "abandondero," devolved into several groups: the evil dero ("detrimental robots"), the damaged but fundamentally good tero ("integrative robots"), and human beings. The dero now inhabit a vast cavern system under the surface of the earth, tormenting surface dwellers with "mech" left behind by the Lemurians—a variety of rays that cause physical pain, mysterious voices, and other negative effects. Moreover, they frequently kidnap, torture, and kill both the meek tero and human beings from above ground.

The March 1945 issue of *Amazing* featured Shaver's manuscript, rewritten by Palmer into the 31,000-word novella *I Remember Lemuria*! and densely peppered with explanatory footnotes. Unlike the usual content of *Amazing*, Shaver and Palmer presented the novella as a true story recalled by "racial memory." Shaver took issue with this term "racial memory" and explained that his stories were "thought records," transmitted into his mind by the tero during his eight-year sojourn in the caves. Reader response to Shaver's stories was enormous. *Amazing*'s circulation boomed, and, by Palmer's account, the magazine received hundreds of letters from readers who claimed to have heard inexplicable voices or encountered the dero themselves. Shaver's worldview, as presented in his stories and Palmer's editorials, gave these readers a context for understanding their own experiences. Palmer claimed to have heard the voices of the dero himself while visiting Shaver. From 1945 to 1948, Shaver—and other authors writing tales about the Lemurians and their descendents—dominated the pages of *Amazing*, with Palmer building the "mystery" in hyperbolic editorials. Increasingly interested in Spiritualism and the occult, Palmer embellished the Shaver Mystery with his own ideas, much to Shaver's chagrin.

Science fiction fandom—at this time primarily urban, sophisticated, and rational—quickly turned against the Shaver Mystery in general and *Amazing* in particular, and prominent fanzine authors dubbed the affair the "Lemurian hoax." They revealed inconvenient facts that cast doubt on Shaver and Palmer's claims: what Palmer actually heard in Shaver's home was Shaver himself making strange utterances while in an apparent trance; the eight years that Shaver claimed to have spent in the caves were actually spent in mental institutions. *Amazing*'s publishers, under pressure from science fiction fans, eventually forced Palmer to stop presenting Shaver's ideas as fact. Sapped of the truth-claims that had driven its popularity, the Shaver Mystery soon faded from the pages of *Amazing*.

Palmer left *Amazing* in 1949 and began publishing his own magazines, including *Fate*, *Other Worlds*, and *Mystic*, all of which published occasional Shaver material throughout the 1950s. Moreover, Palmer had found a new mystery to sensationalize: flying saucers. Palmer was the architect of the early period of the saucer craze, publishing the first-hand account of Kenneth Arnold (who made the first UFO sighting in 1947) in the premiere issue of *Fate*.

Palmer's interest in Shaver had not entirely faded, however, and from 1961 to 1966 he published 16 issues of *The Hidden World*, a compendium of Shaver Mystery and related material. In the early 1960s Shaver's attention turned to "rock books"—images that he saw inside the patterns of minerals he found on his farm, which he asserted were recorded in stone by ancient Lemurians. He began a rock book lending library, sending mimeographed explanations of these images to his correspondents. He also began painting his interpretations of these images, creating sometimes quite beautiful scenes of the ancient civilization that had haunted him for decades. In 1975 Palmer published Shaver's text on the subject, along with his own unfinished autobiography, under the collective title *The Secret World*.

Gabriel Mckee

See also: Channeling; New Age Movement; Psychological Interpretations; UFOlogy

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SHEKHINAH

Shekhinah ("in-dwelling [spirit]") is a post-biblical development of the concept of divine imminence expressed in the biblical term *Kavod* ("Divine glory") and, to a lesser degree, *ruach elohim*, "divine spirit." The "Glory," or visible manifestation of God, is a divine phenomenon that is, in some sense, distinguishable from God, one of several biblical concepts that becomes reified or personalized over time. Post-biblically, Jewish sages speak of similar notions in somewhat different terms. Thus, elaborating on the biblical notion of divine "glory" (*Kavod*) residing in the Temple and among the people, sources begin to speak of the "in-dwelling," a divine aspect that never departs from Israel, rests with it whenever it is gathered in kinship, watches over the sick, remains with Israel even in its failings, even going into exile along with the people. In sympathy with other rabbinic literature, the Babylonian Talmud states, "…wherever Israel wandered in exile, the Shekhinah wandered with them."

There is little in classical rabbinic literature to suggest that the Shekhinah also "dwells" inside individuals; rather, as stated in the Torah, it dwells amidst the people of Israel. But as rabbinic thought evolves, and particularly as mystical metaphysics extend and expand upon earlier rabbinic themes, the Shekhinah increasingly becomes associated with more intimate forms of spirituality and is sometimes described in terms that approximate the Christian notion of the "Holy Spirit"—a divine entity that acts upon, and through, individuals.

In a pivotal development, the 13th-century mystical opus *Sefer Zohar* makes the Shekhinah the centerpiece of its theology. No other divine aspect receives as much exegesis. The book has multiple alternate names for this feature of divinity that interacts with creation in general and Jews specifically. Often these names are laden with feminine, fertility, and maternal tropes (Queen, Apple Orchard, Moon, Rainbow), but especially the term *Metrona* or *Metronita* ("Lady," a Latin term derived from parables in Midrash, where the figure of a Roman matron or high lady often interacts with Jews). Arthur Green, in particular, theorizes that this personification of

divine nurture served medieval Jews as a feminine comforter akin to the role that Mary played for the Christian believer. Yet, for all the explicit and implied proximity between the Shekhinah and the Jews, rarely does the *Zohar* situate the Divine Presence *within* the adept. In one striking exception, human weeping is interpreted as an earthly manifestation of the Shekhinah.

Another related motif of communion with the Divine Presence is that of "feasting" or "feeding" upon the "light" of the Shekhinah. Inspired by the words of Exodus 24:11, "They saw God and ate and drank," the rabbis write of being physically nourished in this way. Thirteenth-century mystic Abraham Abulafia develops this trope further, claiming that the consumer undergoes an apotheosis, becoming a "son of God" through assimilating the light of Shekhinah.

Mystics in the centuries following the distribution of the *Zohar*, such as Moses Cordovero, articulate increasingly refined ideologies and methodologies of *devekut*, mystical union with the Shekhinah, and designate this as a primary goal of kabbalistic prayer and rituals. Some later ceremonies, such as the *tikkun chatzot*, a kind of midnight vigil, include the goal of the worshipper's body becoming a "chariot," a material vehicle or vessel, for the presence of the Shekhinah in the world.

Sources begin to appear that describe incidents of personal pneumatic (spiritual) possession by the Shekhinah during the 16th century. One of the earliest notables reported to be seized by the Shekhinah is Joseph Karo. Accounts of other esoteric masters becoming "vessels" for the Divine Presence and delivering ecstatic messages multiply in the following centuries (*Sha'ar ha-Yichudim; Sefer ha-Meshiv; Shivhe ha-Besht; Megillat Setarim*). Mostly, these episodes are induced, using consciousness-altering techniques known as *gerushin* and *yechudim* ("separations" and "unifications").

This trend strengthens in the early-modern era with the emergence of Hasidism in the 18th century. Hasidism not only continued to report and celebrate the mediumistic experiences of great virtuosos, it also popularized many of these mystical ideals, making *devekut* with Shekhinah a goal for every devotee. This can be achieved through a variety of paths, usually by bringing the right *kavvanah*, or intentionality, to prayer, study, or even the performance of everyday ritual obligations. Reports of pneumatic possession have all but disappeared in the 20th and 21st centuries, and phrases like "having the Shekhinah rest upon him/her" have taken on the more diffuse connotation of being inspired, or spiritually gifted.

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See also: Holy Spirit; Judaism; Rûaḥ

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SIBYL

Sibyls were prophetesses who resided in a number of shrines throughout the Mediterranean in antiquity. Roman historian Varro produced a list of sibyls he was aware of, spanning from Persia to Italy and from Libya to Asia Minor. The three best known were those from Cumae, Erythrea, and Tibur. They were often considered to be crones, thanks to the legend preserved by Ovid of a Sibyl whom Apollo granted a life of 1,000 years in exchange for her virginity. She neglected to ask for an extended youth, and lived nearly the entirety of the time as an old woman. She gradually shrank until she was kept in a jar and finally disappeared with only her voice remaining.

Much like the Oracle of Delphi, Sibyls prophesied ecstatically, as the god would speak through them to answer questions. Sibyls were often consulted following a disaster or a disturbing sign in nature. The prophetess would be consulted in order to provide a solution to the problem, usually in the form of performing rituals. This practice was foreign to Roman culture. Tradition holds that sibylline prophecy originated in the Troad, a Greek region of Asia Minor. Both the Greek god Apollo and the Anatolian goddess Cybele (also known as Magna Mater) were the divine sources of the utterances. Books of the Sibyls's oracles were recorded in Greek, in the form of hexameter poetry. The actual date for the beginning of this practice is not known. The earliest written reference to the practice is by Heraclitus, from the end of the sixth century BCE. Pausanias asserted that the original Hellespontic Sibyl predicted that Helen of Sparta would bring destruction to the Troad peninsula before she had been abducted and the ensuing Trojan War fought.

Tradition holds that one of the early kings of Rome, either Tarquinius

Superbus or Tarquinius Priscus, encountered a Sibyl who offered him nine books of collected prophecies. He balked at the price, and she proceeded to burn three books. She offered him six at the same price unsuccessfully, and burned three more. He purchased the last three at the original asking price of the nine. The area of southern Italy, settled by Greeks and known as Magna Graeca, is assumed to have been the point where the tradition arrived in Rome. In the *Aeneid*, the Sibyl of Cumae from this region helps Aeneas enter the underworld by telling him to pluck the golden bough found near Lake Avernus and guides him on his journey below.

Emperor Augustus and the Tiburine Sibyl, from a book of hours, French, 1524. (THA New Media LLC)

However they arrived in Rome, the books (eventually nine in number) were stored in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Initially they were overseen by two patricians. After the political upheavals of 367 BCE, they were overseen by a group of 10, five patricians and five plebeians, usually former consuls and tribunes. This number grew to 15. The books were burned in a fire in 83 BCE. Tacitus says they were reconstructed, as the Senate ordered

an empire wide search for recorded oracles. Emperor Augustus in 12 BCE moved the books to the temple of Apollo Patrous on the Palatine. He also collected and destroyed some 200 copies of the books. The books were in existence until 405 CE, when the general Stilicho had them destroyed, presumably because they were used against his rule.

Roman tradition holds that the Senate ordered inquiries of the Sibyl roughly 50 times, beginning in 496 BCE. The recorded rationales for consulting the Sibyl include defeat in war, plagues, when rocks fell from the sky, and upon initiating wars or political alliances. The responses generally prescribed rituals, though there were some exceptional demands such as the institution of the Flower Games, bringing an image of Cybele to Rome from Asia Minor, and the building of a temple. In response to Hannibal's defeat of the Roman army at Cannae in 216 BCE, the books decreed that two Greeks and two Gauls should be burned alive.

All that survives of the original Sibylline oracles appears in snippets quoted by classical writers. The longest extant portion of an oracle consists of about 70 lines, as a response to the birth of a hermaphrodite, surviving in the writings of Phlegon of Tralles (second century CE). By the time Varro created his list, collections of Jewish Sibylline oracles were being produced. A number survive and comprise the corpus of 14 books that are called Sibylline Oracles (or the Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles). The Jewish sibylline oracles were composed in the mid-second century BCE, though the final form is from the sixth century CE, mediated, altered, and added to significantly by Christian writers. The oracles claim to originate from pagan sources, but there are decided differences in content.

The Pseudo-Sibylline oracles are a collection of a number of things, from multiple eras. The books are filled with homilies, post-event prophecies, ideas from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, and eschatological treatises. Several of the early Christian fathers make references to these texts. The Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles may have been seen by pagan Romans, though it is not certain. A Christian apologist writing to Marcus Aurelius in the second century CE assumed that the emperor had seen the texts he was quoting.

There has always been political and religious propaganda contained in the oracles. However, the Jewish stratum of the Pseudo-Sibylline oracles introduces a new concept. For these Sibyls, the answer to escaping calamity was to practice morality rather than engaging in pagan rituals. For example,

these oracles address the importance of sexual morality (avoiding homosexuality, among other things). The notion of behaviors needing to be modified is new to the Greco-Roman religious world. Another innovation was the declaration that idolatry was wrong and that the one true God of Jewish (and later, Christian) tradition was to be worshipped. This message clearly was not coming from pagan prophetesses.

Mark Anthony Phelps

See also: Antiquity; Oracle of Delphi

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SMURL HAUNTING

Jack and Janet Smurl of West Pittston, Pennsylvania, came to national attention in 1986 with claims that their home was afflicted by ghostly and demonic activity. Their story attracted the work of demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren, and public interest in the alleged events resulted in a book and later a made-for-television movie.

The Smurls moved into their home in the early 1970s and later claimed to have a number of frightening experiences starting in 1974 after their daughter was confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church. These included strange noises, foul odors, and objects moving about the house. The experiences were said to escalate from annoying to frightening in 1985, including an attack on their German shepherd, and sexual assaults on both of the Smurls. Their story came to the attention of the media in 1986.

The Smurls turned to various sources to explain the phenomena, including a psychic who claimed that someone had been murdered and buried near their house in the late 1880s. Others blamed past homeowners suspected of devil worship. The Smurls contacted demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren in 1986, and they investigated along with psychic Rosemary Frueh. The Warrens claimed to see and hear various manifestations confirming the Smurls' story. According to their research, the manifestations were the result of demonic entities.

The Smurls asked that the Catholic Church perform an exorcism, but it refused. It would later investigate but could not confirm a demonic presence. Through the Warrens the Smurls drew upon the services of Bishop Robert McKenna of Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel in Monroe, Connecticut, who performed two exorcisms on the house. The Smurls stated that the strange phenomena continued after the performance of the ritual. McKenna performed a third exorcism in September 1986.

The Smurls' experiences caught the attention of others in popular culture, including actor Jason Miller, who played Father Damien Karras in *The Exorcist* (1973). Miller lived in Scranton, but after visiting the home he did not see anything unusual. Paul Kurtz of The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal attempted an investigation but was denied access. The Smurl family moved out of the house just before publication of their story in the book *The Haunted*, which was adapted into a made-for-television movie that aired in 1991.

John W. Morehead

See also: Warren, Ed and Lorraine

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SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

One of the tasks of a sociologist is to step back from an individual belief or practice and look at a wider social and cultural context. Spirit possession and exorcism are not a purely personal phenomena: Exorcism might happen in a house, and the ritual might be seen removed from wider society, but there are social and cultural factors that determine whether someone's behavior will be interpreted as possession by a spirit and whether a given ritual will be effective in exorcising it.

Sociologists of religion tend to use a methodological agnostic approach when conducting research. This means that, unlike theologians, sociologists do not analyze the veracity of religious claims. Sociologists study what

people do with or against a particular belief and what this belief does to people. Some key questions for a sociology of exorcism include what exorcism does for a society, whether possession is regarded as positive or negative, and what factors cause people to believe in possession and exorcism.

What does exorcism do for people in a sociological sense? From a functionalist perspective (one that looks at how social structures and values hold people together in a society) exorcism can be interpreted as a process that reinforces the strength of a religion in keeping a community together. The activities of the exorcist, especially rituals that bring spectators (e.g., the thousands of people who attended the exorcism of the Ursuline convent of Loudun in 17th-century France or the crowds that observe mass deliverance gatherings in the United States today) reinforce people's beliefs in the devil and thus demonstrate the strength of the exorcist's religion to cure people. The ritual thereby strengthens the social and cultural links that the people share between each other and with a particular religion.

Exorcism can also reinforce the moral code of conduct within a religious community when exorcists attribute possession to immorality. If the community accepts that a possession was caused by taking drugs, being involved in the occult, or some other moral transgression, exorcisms indirectly promote particular religious values. Exorcism also allows one religion to reinforce its strength in comparison to competing religions. For example, Europe's Muslim community is home to both the more legalistic Salafi tradition and the marabouts; these are holy men who represent the traditional Muslim practices of North Africa. By providing *roqya* (Muslim exorcism) Salafist *raqis* (exorcists) are able to complete with the marabouts for clients and followers.

Sociologists from a more critical perspective (those who see conflict between dominant and subordinated groups in a society) may interpret these rituals as an ideological apparatus that reinforces people's beliefs in religion and prevents them from realizing that they are being oppressed by dominant social groups. Belief in exorcism creates a process that convinces people to adhere to a religion and thereby accept social and cultural values that benefit more powerful people. By showing the presence of the devil and ways to save people from it, exorcism creates a system of validity to reinforce people's need for religion and thus their dependence on a group. If the religious group is part of mainstream society (e.g., Christianity in medieval

Europe), exorcism reinforces people's submission to the state and the clergy.

In other situations, exorcism may be practiced by a religious group that is regarded as deviant or in opposition to the state or mainstream religion (e.g., possession cults in Latin America). A critical sociologist might argue that such groups use exorcism to express a sentiment of rebellion. On the other hand, a sociologist from a functionalist point of view might claim these groups ultimately support a society by providing as a social outlet for the release of social anxieties and frustrations.

In the anthropologist I. M. Lewis's classical study of the subject, possession appears to be more frequent among the disadvantaged and marginalized sectors of a society. Possession cults, for example, frequently attract women and low-status men. Lewis argues that possession empowers these people to transgress their subordination by speaking in voices that are not theirs and that are heard. However, it must be noted that some works have appeared after Lewis to claim that possession is not simply for the powerless. Michael Cuneo's research on exorcism in contemporary America, for example, finds that middle-class people are also involved in this phenomenon.

Different cultures may regard spirit possession as negative or desirable. While many cultures have traditions of exorcism to expel spirits, others practice "adorcism" (a term borrowed by Lewis from Luc de Heusch), which deals with inducing possession. Sociologists and anthropologists have conducted numerous studies of cultures that practice adorcism. Often, counseling, orientation, guidance, clairvoyance, and healing are provided through this form of possession. A culture's attitude toward possession is often tied to larger social structures such as class and gender. For example, in male-dominated societies in which women's spirit possession groups abound, the possessing spirits are often interpreted as maleficent, and exorcism can be used in this context to control and subjugate the female practitioners.

Within a diverse, modern society, it is common to find varying beliefs and attitudes toward possession and exorcism. One of the tools sociologists use to measure belief is survey data, and current statistics indicate that many modern Western people believe in demonic possession. In the United States for example, Gallup polls show that belief in the devil has increased from 55 percent in 1990 to 70 percent in 2004. In the 1998 Southern Focus Poll, which specifically sampled people from the southern United States, 59 percent of respondents answered "yes" to the question "Do you believe that

people on this Earth are sometimes possessed by the Devil?" While survey data cannot prove why some people believe in possession and others do not, it does allow sociologists to analyze patterns between belief and other social factors. For instance, in the 2007 Baylor Religion Survey, 48 percent of American respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "It is possible for people to be possessed by the Devil/demons." Individuals who expressed belief in demonic possession tended to have less formal education than those who did not. They were also more likely to live in the south and less likely to live in the east. People who belonged to evangelical or black Protestant churches were more likely than Catholics to believe in possession, and Catholics were more likely to believe in possession than mainline Protestants. Finally, people who believed in possession were more likely to attend church regularly. This data allows sociologists to form theories about why people believe in possession and exorcism.

To be believable, possession and exorcism must be supported by a "plausibility structure" rooted in the way people within a society think. Cultural institutions such as religion, scientific authority, and media all contribute to the plausibility structures that will support or hinder belief in possession and exorcism. Western culture has inherited a long religious tradition of possession and exorcism. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all have traditions that affirm the reality of possessing spirits and prescribed rituals for removing them.

However, the traditional religious view of possession and exorcism has been challenged by the findings of psychology and modern medicine. In the modern era, Western cultural elite became particularly skeptical of possession, including many clergy. Post-Enlightenment theology often regarded discussion of possession and exorcism as an embarrassment, and popular belief in possession was discouraged. However, this trend is now reversing. The Catholic Church, for example, after denigrating "superstitious" aspects of popular religion within its tradition (e.g., dismissing of some of its processions of saint statues, certain devotional practices, and exorcist activities), has shown greater support for these practices. The Vatican has also demonstrated renewed interest in exorcism, paving the way for new theologically trained experts. Increased support for exorcism from church authorities has coincided with a resurgence of possession and exorcism in popular culture—a trend that has been underway since the release of the film *The Exorcist* in 1973. These factors have an

impact on the plausibility structures of Western society and likely contribute to raising rates of belief in possession and exorcism.

Adam Possamai

See also: Catholicism; Deliverance Ministry; *Exorcist, The*; Islam; Loudun Possessions

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SOUTH AFRICA

Spirit possession in South Africa is intimately related to conceptions of health. The spirits of the ancestors, if not properly acknowledged, can become angry or vengeful, visiting communities with sickness, infertility, and other misfortunes. When such calamities strike, a *sangoma*, or diviner, channels the ancestors through his or her body to diagnose the cause and prescribe a cure. This practice has a long history and remains important today, especially in the face contemporary issues such as HIV/AIDS and changing cultural norms surrounding sexual orientation.

"*Sangoma*" was originally a Zulu word that has come to mean "diviner" in contemporary South African parlance. Likewise, *sangoma*'s practice of ancestor divination was originally limited to the Nguni (Xhosa, Zulu, Swazi, Ndebele, etc.) peoples before the late 19th century. The practice has now spread to other groups, including members of the white population. *Sangomas* are generally women. When a person becomes sick or has dreams, visions, or unusual behavior patterns that nothing seems to cure, it is often

interpreted as the ancestors' call to become a *sangoma*. During initiation, the novice engages in ritual dances called *intlombe*, in which she or he enters into a trance. In that state, the dancer becomes intimately connected to the spirit, divining the cause of illness. Initiation ends when the novice is reintegrated into society as a *sangoma*, thus bringing to completion the process of *ukuthwasa*, or "coming out after having not been seen for some time." The idiom is pregnant with imagery of death and rebirth.

In ritual divination, an ancestral spirit possesses the *sangoma*. She or he enters into a trance characterized by bodily contortions, hiccupping, and dissociation. In this state, *sangomas* claim that they no longer see, speak, hear, or move for themselves, but rather it is the ancestral spirit in them. The people attending the ritual (i.e., the petitioner and his or her supporters) clap or drum along with the movements of the *sangoma*. The diviner and the petitioners enter into dialogue, through which it is thought the ancestor will reveal the cause of the petitioner's malady and propose a solution. In the case of vengeful ancestors, the petitioner will be required to make a sacrifice or offer libations. In the case of witchcraft (which is generally thought of as the working of jealous neighbors), the *sangoma* may send the patient to an herbalist (*nyanga*) to get medicine (*muthi*).

Among the Zulu, members of the *izizwe*, *amandiki*, and *amandawu* cults share many similarities with the *sangomas*. They use spirits to divine and cure maladies, and sickness calls them to cult membership. It is not surprising, therefore, that the cults expanded greatly during the influenza epidemic of 1919–1920 and the malaria outbreak of 1933. Those who become members of the spirit cults perform dances that climax in a state of trance. In these dances, participants believe themselves to be possessed by spirits, but not necessarily those of their ancestors. Often, the spirits are thought to come from other ethnic groups. The possessed speak different languages, which may be a variation of Zulu or mimic the sound of the local Indian population. Not all forms of spirit possession are directed toward healing. Among the Pondo, witches are thought of as having been possessed by familiars, called *tokoloshe*. These familiars are conceived of as grotesque man-like creatures, which do the witches' bidding of destroying life and property.

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the expansion of migratory labor brought South Africans from various ethno-linguistic groups into close proximity, leading to religious mixing. Thus, the Sotho-Tswana,

who hitherto divined with bones, learned ancestor divination from the Nguni, and the Nguni began divining with bones. New possession cult practices also spread across ethno-linguistic lines, accelerated by the increased mobility of the rural populations. The late 19th and early 20th centuries also saw the massive influx of Christian missionaries into South Africa, who translated Bibles into the indigenous languages. These materials provided new resources for indigenous religious leaders, and indeed they yielded many new religious movements.

African Initiated Churches (AICs) were developed, in part, as a response to white missionaries' uncompromising position on African culture. Many African Christians felt that mainline denominations were unable to address their spiritual needs vis-à-vis health, possession, witches, and ancestors. Some found a common ground between charismatic Christianity and many of the indigenous practices of Africa. Engenas Lekganyane founded the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) in 1925, emphasizing the healing power of the Holy Spirit. For his group, the Holy Spirit functioned in a similar way to that of the ancestors among the *sangomas*. Zionist diviners seek revelations from the Holy Spirit, and they use the Spirit to perform exorcisms and healings. Among some groups, there is drumming, dancing, and clapping. While the spirits of *izizwe*, *amandiki*, *amandawu*, and other new cults are interpreted as devils, ancestor visitation is not viewed as immoral or idolatrous.

Attitudes and practices around spirit possession have also been affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), an estimated 6,100,000 South Africans were infected with the virus, roughly 11 percent of the entire population. After years of denial and mismanagement of the epidemic, the South African government began the National Antiretroviral (ARV) Programme in 2004. In addition to the biomedical understanding of the disease, South Africans interpret HIV/AIDS through the lens of indigenous medicines. According to Claire Laurier Decoteau, people, even though they may be emphatic about using only one or the other, use both ARVs and traditional healers. One of her contacts claimed that he did not believe in the efficacy of *sangomas*, and only took ARVs. Nevertheless, he had been going through cleansing rituals in the Zion Christian Church, drinking water, coffee, and tea to cleanse his body of pollutants and evil spirits. Likewise, after a period of illness, the same gentleman began visiting *sangomas* and using indigenous medicines. In addition to Decoteau, many scholars have

been researching the intersection of biomedicine and indigenous medicines. Their work often focuses on hybridity, seeking to gain better insight into African cosmologies and to bridge the gulf between the two practices of medicine.

While South Africa's constitution protects against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, many in the wider society still find same-sex sexual activity to be immoral. While this may be the case, the role of *sangoma* has offered gay and lesbian Africans a socially acceptable space. In 1969, psychologist S. G. Lee noted that most *sangomas* were women, and the few that were men were nearly all "of homosexual bent." Lee interpreted this through a (rather outdated) Freudian lens, arguing that they suffered from anxiety neuroses that were manifested in their dreams. He described how male *sagomas* related dreams about being sexually attacked by another male, often a male ancestor. More recent studies have noted the strategic aspect of spirit possession for gays and lesbians. *Sangomas* are often excluded from traditional marriage; thus, gay and lesbian diviners can avoid the expectations of marriage and family. Likewise, because a spirit possesses a *sangoma*, he or she does not act on his or her own volition. Thus, when acting under the influence of spirits, gay and lesbian *sangomas* are not chastised for transgressing the moral order of a society that often condemns same-sex sexual activity.

Stephen Lloyd

See also: Psychological Interpretations

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SPIRITUALISM

Modern Spiritualism emerged as an American religious tradition in the mid-19th century. In 1848, in Hydesville, New York, two daughters of John Fox, Margaretta (Margaret), age 15, and Catherine (Kate), age 12, claimed to hear rapping noises they could not explain. Upon further investigation by the Fox family and their neighbors, they deciphered the knocks through a series of yes and no questions given to the source. In this manner, the spirit claimed to be of a peddler, murdered by a former resident of the house, and buried in the cellar. Later the Fox family performed an excavation of their cellar and claimed to have found human remains. Word of the Fox sisters' ability to communicate with spirits of the dead spread, and more and more people requested demonstrations. Not long after this knocking occurred, Margaret visited her married sister, Leah Fish (née Fox), who lived in Rochester, New York. At this time, Leah also discovered she had the ability to communicate with spirits. This led to widespread demonstrations, including the performance by the sisters on stages in various venues in New York. It was in these demonstrations that Modern Spiritualism was born.

Sisters Margaret, Kate, and Leah Fox played a key role in the emergence of Spiritualism during the mid-19th century. Lithograph by Currier and Ives, about 1850. (Library of Congress)

In addition to the Fox sisters, many of those who observed spirit communication found they also had the ability to converse with spirits. Those

who could communicate with the dead were called mediums. In most cases, mediums were women who seized the opportunity of being a medium to expand their roles in society and move out of the domestic sphere. The kinds of mediumship that the Fox sisters and others demonstrated were similar, in many respects, to other kinds of spirit communication found in other religious traditions, including Shakerism and Swedenborgianism. It also had similarities to trance states that occurred through mesmerism, also known as animal magnetism. However, one of the important differences is Spiritualism was that anyone who had psychic abilities could claim to speak to spirits. Initially there were no Spiritualist churches or institutions to oversee and regulate mediums. When Spiritualist churches and institutions did emerge, they had limited impact on the movement. For the most part, mediums were independent religious leaders, who claimed to be directed by spirits and spirits alone.

Initially Spiritualism lacked any kind of cohesive theology or cosmology that structures a religious movement. However, not long after the movement emerged, it loosely adopted the writings and theology of Andrew Jackson Davis, also known as the Poughkeepsie Seer as he was a medium from Poughkeepsie, New York. Jackson claimed to have had a visitation by the spirit of Emmanuel Swedenborg, and during this visit Davis asserted that he learned how the universe maintained its harmony and that Swedenborg gave him a magical staff that allowed him to heal the sick. Davis published what he learned in a six-volume series entitled *The Great Harmonia: Being a Philosophical Revelation of the Natural, Spiritual and Celestial Universe*. The first volume was published in 1850 and the sixth by 1861. This became the underlying cosmology and theology of Spiritualism, although it was variously applied and often contested by mediums.

The spirit world was frequently described as similar to the physical world. According to accounts made by the dead, people retained their personality, knowledge, and physical characteristics, including race and ethnicity. Loved ones and families were reunited in the spirit world, and friendships were maintained. Life in spirit was frequently compared to the living world without the encumbrance of a physical body and things such as pain and illness. When children died, they were described as in the care of others, typically family members who had passed, and being raised in spirit. Thus children went to school in the spirit world, people had homes, and things that were unknown were revealed to those who had passed. For many

of the living, these descriptions of the spirit world eased the fear of dying. Moreover, couples, children, parents, and family members could look forward to seeing their loved ones again. During and after the Civil War and World War I, there were marked surges in séance participation as family members attempted to determine what happened to their loved ones or to see assurance that they were without pain on the other side of death.

Because there was no established clergy or religious hierarchy, many people claimed to have the ability to communicate with spirits. These claims were not limited to the United States. Spiritualism spread to England in 1852 and then continental Europe and Scandinavia shortly after. The means of spirit communication varied from medium to medium, but popular methods included knocking sounds, such as the Fox sisters used; trances where the spirit would possess the medium and speak through or use of the medium's body; automatic writing, drawing, or painting where the medium claimed to be controlled by spirit; talking boards, such as the Ouija board, would spell out words and sentences; musical instruments, which often levitated and played songs; and later, by the 1870s, spirits were claimed to have visually materialized. In almost all these cases the medium claimed to be a passive participant. Their presence was necessary for spirits to manifest, but the mediums claimed to have no part in making the phenomenon appear.

Many Spiritualists and non-Spiritualists debated the relationship of Spiritualism to Christianity. While historically the movement shares many similarities with liberal Protestant Christianity, prominent Protestant ministers contested Spiritualism as a form of Christianity. Instead, they likened it to demon possession, cited the Bible's prohibition of necromancy (communication with the dead), and pointed to the encounter with the Witch of Endor in the Bible (1 Samuel 28:3–25). Some Spiritualists concurred, seeing Spiritualism as an opportunity to distance themselves from Christianity, which they saw as oppressive, especially for women. However, other Spiritualists disagreed and claimed that Spiritualism was supported by Biblical narratives. Moreover, some claimed that Jesus was a medium and that his miracles were not unlike the phenomena produced by mediums. Over time, Spiritualism has been seen as moving away from Christianity, and most Spiritualists in the 21st century see it as a separate religious tradition.

The primary way Spiritualists communicated with each other was through books, magazines, and newspapers. Cities such as Boston and New York became hubs for Spiritualist publications. Newspapers such as the *Banner of*

Light, *Spiritual Telegraph*, *Herald of Light*, *The Two Worlds*, *The Esoteric Christian*, *Christian Spiritualist*, and *Spiritual Scientist* became the forums in which issues were debated, news was reported, lectures were announced, and various claims supported or refuted. It was a common practice for newspapers to reprint articles or respond to articles from other newspapers. Similarly, books were published by mediums that announced revelations from the spirit world and gave lost histories and biographies. Other spiritualists attempted to give histories of the mediums and the Spiritualist movement itself. Emma Hardinge Britten's *Nineteenth Century Miracles; or, Spirits and Their Work in Every Country of the Earth* (1884) attempted to demonstrate the universality of Spiritualism and give a reliable history of the movement's happenings around the globe.

While Spiritualism's most common means of communication was the periodical, Spiritualists also established associations and held annual conferences. These conferences and associations, however, were limited. Mediums generally shunned organizations and distrusted their leadership, which was frequently male. Thus conferences were more informal in the sense that the speakers could speak about a number of related topics. Nineteenth-century society often limited the availability of public speaking for women. Spiritualist conferences, whether regional or national, offered mediums a platform to address religious and nonreligious concerns. Mediums also frequently spoke about various reform movements such as women's suffrage and rights, marriage, dress, and health reform, as well as temperance. Despite nonorganizational tendencies, enough Spiritualists wanted some kind of organization. The first national spiritualist organization was the American Association of Spiritualists founded in 1865 in Philadelphia.

In addition to Spiritualist organizations, Spiritualist communities and campgrounds were also established throughout the United States. For instance, Lake Pleasant, founded at Montague, Massachusetts, in 1870, was an early and prominent American Spiritualist campground. It was also part of the New England Spiritualist Campmeeting Association. Other Spiritualists camps included Camp Chesterfield in Chesterfield, Indiana; Onset in Wareham, Massachusetts; and Wonewoc Spiritualist Camp in Wonewoc, Wisconsin. Probably the two largest Spiritualist communities are Lily Dale Spiritualist Assembly, located in Pomfret, New York, and Cassadaga Spiritualist camp, in Cassadaga, Florida.

Not surprisingly, non-Spiritualist onlookers alleged the mediums were

inventing the things they said, or producing the phenomenon fraudulently. As a result, mediums frequently allowed people to investigate and prove for themselves the reality of the spirit communication. In most cases people took precautions such as holding the medium's hands or tying their hands to the furniture to deter them from fraud. With these kinds of precautions, the onlookers left the séances convinced of the reality of the communication. However, others developed elaborate means to test mediums and their claims. One of the first to publish about Spiritualism Scientifically was a chemist, Professor Robert Hare, of the University of Pennsylvania. In 1855 he published *Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations*. Within it he included elaborate descriptions and diagrams of experiments he used to test mediums. Later, in both America and the United Kingdom, societies for the investigation of psychical phenomenon emerged to more systematically investigate supernatural phenomena and publish the findings of these investigations. The Society for Psychical Research emerged in England in 1882, and its American counterpart was founded in 1885. Both societies took the claims of mediums seriously but also wanted to test them under Scientifically validated circumstances. As a result, many mediums were found to be fraudulent, although there were some whose abilities the SPR could not explain.

Probably the most famous nonacademic Spiritualist investigator was the stage magician, Harry Houdini. Houdini was able to use his stage magic abilities and knowledge to discover and expose fraudulent mediums who were able to fool scientists and the public. He wrote about his exploits in *A Magician Among the Spirits* (1924). Houdini was also part of the 1923 Scientific American committee that offered a cash prize of $5,000 to any medium that could manifest spiritual phenomenon under circumstances determined and monitored by the committee. No medium was ever able to claim the prize. Houdini died in 1926. However, before he passed, he made an agreement with his wife, Bess, that he would attempt to come back through a medium and give the secret password of "Rosabelle, believe." Despite many attempts Bess never received his secret message.

Houdini was not the only celebrity associated with Spiritualism in the 20th century. Sherlock Holmes author, Sir Conan Doyle, was an ardent Spiritualist and frequently made trips around England and to the United States to promote Spiritualism. Doyle and Houdini were friends, although Doyle claimed Houdini was able to achieve his feats through spiritual

powers, a claim Houdini denied. Their friendship ended with Houdini's 1924 book on debunking Spiritualism, a stance that Doyle could not accept. Doyle himself was not a medium but attended séances frequently and wrote an often cited history of the religious movement.

By the end of the 1920s, Spiritualism was on a decline in America, although it maintained greater support longer in England. World War I was the last spike in Spiritualist interest, and this faded quickly. Perhaps it was the increased number of medium exposés or shifting spiritual and religious beliefs, but the number of mediums greatly diminished as did the number of Spiritualists communities and churches. By the Great Depression of the 1930s, Spiritualism was no longer a significant religious movement in the United States. Although it has persisted into the 21st century, it has had to compete with other movements such as channeling and the occult revival of the 1950s and 1960s. Today, Spiritualist churches dot the American landscape run by certified Spiritualist mediums and ministers. When it emerged, Spiritualism met many of the religious needs of Americans. However, over time, those needs have changed. Though Spiritualists remain active today, modern Spiritualism remains relatively small.

John L. Crow

See also: Automatic Writing; Channeling; Ouija Board; Watseka Wonder

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STORYTELLING AND POSSESSION

Spirit Possession—both of the bard himself and of the bard's ancestral lineage— plays an important role in storytelling traditions across the world. Storytellers are the bridge between two worlds—the world of the listener and the world of the story—inviting cultural identification with mediums, oracles, shamans, and other religious figures that also move between worlds. In some cultures, it is believed that storytellers are selected by spirit entities and given

their verbal prowess through dreams, trances, and other shamanic states. In others, it is not the individual storyteller but rather a lineage of storytellers that is transformed through an encounter with a divine figure. Throughout a particular oral performance, spiritual entities continue to receive special recognition; bards and storytellers often beg to receive inspiration from deities and spirits in order to ensure the recited words are accurate and appealing. Despite their unique cultural environments, bardic traditions of storytelling often feature similar personal narratives of spiritual experience that serve to legitimize the bard to his audience, exalt the bard's poetic abilities, and situate the bard as a bridge with the spiritual world.

Ancient Grecian storytellers—called aoidoi (*aōidos)* and later rhapsode (*rhapsōdos)*—would often undergo a dream experience in which they gained their abilities directly from the spirits of the Muses themselves. In his poem *Theogony*, the seventh-century BCE bard Hesiod recounts being visited in a dream by the Muses while a shepherd on Mount Helicon. They hand him a laurel staff, which not only gives him the ability to create oral poetry, but also to speak accurately of both the past and the future. From what evidence we have of the performances of oral poetry in ancient Greece, the Muses were often invoked as both listeners and participants in the oral performance. In the written poems attributed to the oral recitations of Homer, Hesiod's contemporary, the storyteller frequently calls upon the Muses to observe his poem and aid him in reciting the difficult parts.

The role of possession and possessing spirits in the case of Tibetan storytellers is similar to the ancient Grecian situation. Tibet's living oral epic —Gesar of Ling—is performed by bards who generally undergo shamanic experience in the form of a trance, possession, or a dream. In his research on contemporary Gesar bardic traditions, Solomon George FitzHerbert found that Tibetan storytellers explain the Gesar tales as "falling" to them from an otherworldly source, generally using a colloquial Tibetan idiom that means "to descend" or "to cascade" (*'bab*). The contemporary Tibetan bard Samdrup (*bsam grub*) explains that as a child under the care of a local Buddhist monk, he had a dream in which every episode of the Gesar epic was etched onto his mind by a flying spirit. Upon waking, Samdrup claims it was as if something had transformed inside of him, and he was not only able to recite the entire epic, but felt deeply compelled to do so. Another contemporary bard tells a similar story of a dream in which spirits stuffed written copies of the Gesar epic into his insides. This reliance on

otherworldly forces continues during public performances of the Gesar epic, where both Tibetan storytellers themselves and the particular characters they embody at any given moment will call upon various Buddhist and local spiritual entities to aid them and guide their song. The Tibetan tradition undoubtedly shares links with the Yimakan tradition of oral storytelling practiced by the Hezhen people of China, which utilizes similar oral recital techniques and whose storytellers undergo comparable shamanic experiences before beginning to recite.

While generally not emphasizing individual possession by or encounter with a spirit entity, West African storytellers—called *griot* or *jeli*—consider their particular historical and biological lineage of storytellers to be divinely marked. Across West Africa, griots serve as the oral history and genealogy keepers of their communities and tell a variety of stories—including humorous folk tales, moralistic fables, and weighty ethnic histories. Griots of the Mandinka and Bambara tribes of Mali link their lineages back to Muhammad through the figure of Surakata, whom popular Arabic narratives say inspired the Islamic Prophet with song before a great battle. Afterwards Surakata was selected to become the progenitor of the griots and rewarded with particular powers of oral performance through consuming either the Prophet's blood or a piece of the Prophet's flesh. In other versions, Surakata is consecrated through being marked on the forehead with Muhammad's blood. While the exact means is open for debate, modern-day griots are clear that this spiritual transformation has been passed down through their bloodline, and that they are skilled storytellers with particular oral and poetic abilities unlike any other man. Therefore, griots demand high compensation for their work, presenting such payment as a religious and spiritual duty in their songs.

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See also: Antiquity; Bali; Islam; Tibet

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TALBYE, DOROTHY

The Dorothy Talbye trial took place in Massachusetts in 1638. Dorothy Talbye (also spelled Talbie) suffered from melancholia and delusions after the birth of her fourth child, whom she named "Difficulty." When Difficulty was three years old, Talbye killed her by breaking her neck. Although Talbye suffered abuse and showed signs of mental illness, her behavior was interpreted as a form of possession by Satan. Talbye was convicted of murder and hanged in December 1638, becoming the first woman to be executed in Massachusetts.

Information about Talbye largely comes from *Winthrop's Journal, "History of New England," 1630–1649, Volume: 1*. In this publication, Governor John Winthrop uses the term "distracted" to refer to people who struggled so much psychologically that they seemed to lose control over their actions, with these distractions sometimes leading to insanity. With no reasonable way to vent frustrations or deal with depression, mental illness could inspire violence and infanticide sometimes occurred. It is likely that Talbye fell into this category.

Talbye was originally well thought of at her Salem church, but that changed after the birth of Difficulty in 1635. The daughter's name likely reflects challenges faced during labor. Other difficulties existed for Talbye, as she lived in a Puritan society that placed high expectations on women while giving them little autonomy. Husbands typically ruled the homes, pregnancies were frequent, and the wilderness in which they lived presented dangers and hardships.

By 1637, domestic strife clearly existed on the family's hardscrabble farm as Talbye fought frequently with her husband John and, at one point, refused to provide meat to the family, in an apparent attempt to starve them. It is unlikely that fault solely rested on Dorothy; John was later excommunicated for prideful and unnatural treatment of his second wife. However, county court magistrates found Dorothy guilty of severe violence against her husband. Various punishments were handed out from magistrates and church officials alike, including being whipped and being chained to a post in

Salem's public square. Although these remedies initially seemed to work, causing her to behave more dutifully towards John, Talbye quickly became increasingly quarrelsome with family, neighbors, and her minister. She believed that she received revelations from God, and was therefore beyond the authority of the church. Ultimately, she was excommunicated; when that announcement was being made, Talbye attempted to walk out of the church, but was forcefully stopped.

In 1638, she broke Difficulty's neck. She confessed to the crime, saying that the voice of God directed her actions to save her daughter from suffering future misery. Governor Winthrop interpreted Talbye's actions as motivated by Satan rather than God. He claimed that she "was so possessed with Satan that he persuaded her (by delusions which she listened to as revelation from God) to break the neck of her own child so that she might be free of misery."

At her arraignment, the court required her to confess again, to ensure the original one had not been given under duress. She refused to speak and would not uncover her face or stand unless forced. Finally, Governor Winthrop ordered people to place heavy rocks on her chest until she either confessed or died. The threat of this torture caused Dorothy to confess to murder. Puritans had a high conviction rate for women convicted of infanticide, and Talbye was sentenced to hang on December 6, 1638. She requested being beheaded instead, calling it less painful and less shameful. Her request was denied.

At her execution, Talbye continued to resist. She pulled off the cloth intended to cover her face and placed it between her neck and the noose. Before dying, she attempted to wrap her legs around the ladder to protect her neck. The Reverend Hugh Peter used the execution as an opportunity to warn the audience about the dangers of defying church authority.

Kelly Boyer Sagert

See also: Gender; New England, 17th Century

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TANACU EXORCISM

The event known as "the Tanacu exorcism" involved a 23-year-old nun who died while undergoing an unauthorized exorcism at a monastery in Tanacu, Romania, in 2005. The case marked a new religious climate in post-Communist Romania in which newly recruited priests and surging folk piety undermined the ability of the Romanian Orthodox Church to regulate ritual practices. While ritual exorcism is officially dismissed by the Romanian Orthodox Church, Romania's thriving folk tradition is replete with curses, witchcraft, and demonic possession. This situation has allowed certain priests to become popular with the public by performing unauthorized exorcisms.

Irina Cornici was born in 1982 in the Ibăneşti village, Bârlad County, Romania. At the age of two she witnessed the suicide of her father. Cornici's mother was no longer able to care for her and her brother, Vasile, and both children were sent to a state orphanage. There, Cornici experienced physical and sexual abuse from older children and the orphanage staff. In the late 1990s, Joachim Pfaff, a German photographer came to Bârlad, sponsored by a German foundation. Pfaff had a history of sexual misconduct and paid Cornici and several girls at the orphanage to be photographed in erotic poses.

In 1999, Irina went to the agricultural high school in nearby city. Two years later she left for Germany where she worked as a babysitter. On April 5, 2005, she visited Romania to see Paraschiva Anghel, a friend she had made at the orphanage. Anghel was now a nun at the Holy Trinity monastery in Tanacu, Vaslui. Before she could return home, Cornici suffered a nervous breakdown in which she hallucinated and attempted to hurt herself. The monastery was run by Daniel Corogeanu, a hieromonk (a position in the Orthodox Church that is both a priest and a monk). Corogeanu and the nuns witnessed the disturbance and called an ambulance. On April 8 Cornici was hospitalized in the psychiatric ward of the county hospital and diagnosed with "early schizophrenia." She was released from the hospital on April 23 and decided to remain at Holy Trinity monastery as a nun.

On June 9, 2005, Cornici was unable to retrieve a large sum of money that had been held for her in trust. Corogeanu and the attending nuns later claimed that the loss of this money caused another breakdown in which

Cornici became violent. However, her doctor later said that her relapse was likely due to the fact that she had run out of her psychiatric medication and not received a refill. Corogeanu and the nuns explained that they would have called an ambulance but that Cornici's brother, Vasile, stated that he was mistrustful of doctors and urged the clergy to treat Cornici at the monastery. Corogeanu and the nuns complied and engaged in a series of prayers and liturgy to remove demons from Cornici's body that included the sacrament of anointing the sick and the *molitve* (prayer) of Saint Basil the Great. These measures seemed to only provoke Irina, making her more violent and difficult to handle in the days that followed. When the nuns locked her in her chamber, she attempted to set fire to it. After this incident, the nuns tied her to cross-shaped wooden planks by her arms and legs using towels and chains. They continued to perform rituals for banishing the demon that caused her illness. Because Irina shouted profanities, they gagged her. Cornici remained bound without food for three days.

The nuns claimed that on the morning of June 15, Cornici appeared lucid. They untied her and gave her bread and tea. She passed out after eating. The nuns appointed someone to get an ambulance, which arrived around 2:00 p.m. The ambulance doctor gave Cornici six doses of adrenaline and took her to the hospital. The nuns declared that they were told that she was still alive at the time; however, the doctor on duty at the hospital told them that she had been dead for 24 hours. Inconsistencies in the medical records led to a prolonged debate in the media over who was responsible for her death.

Romanian orthodox nuns carry the coffin of Maricica Irina Cornici. (AP Photo)

Police were summoned, and the doctor on duty accused Corogeanu and four of the nuns of murder. Overnight, the media began to refer to Corogeanu as "the red-bearded killer" accompanied by "idolatrous nuns." Before the trial, Corogeanu presided over Cornici's funeral. The Romanian Orthodox Church denied that an exorcism was necessary and excommunicated all of the accused clergy. Corogeanu stated that his intention was to help and heal Cornici's soul. All five defendants were found guilty of unlawful deprivation of freedom resulting in the death of the victim. In 2007, Corogeanu was sentenced to seven years in prison. One nun was sentenced to six years, and the remaining three each received five. In 2012 the case was made into the film *Dupa Dealuri (Beyond the Hills)* by Romanian director Christian Mungiu. The Tanacu exorcism remains an important case study in the medical and ethical dangers inherent in exorcism. Upon his release in 2014, Corogeanu initially announced that he would found a new monastery dedicated to Cornici's memory. However, after being threatened by angry villagers, he became a hermit, dwelling in a hut in the forest.

Dana Florentina Nicolae and Catalin Mihai Manolache

See also: Deaths Resulting from Exorcism

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TANTRA

While the term "tantra" has been used in a variety of ways, it generally refers to secret or esoteric teachings that began to permeate Indian religious traditions from the last centuries of the first millennium CE onwards. They often contradict ideas found in traditional Hinduism. Tantric teachings may claim to supersede the Vedas, the most important texts in Hinduism. They may offer initiations that have little regard for orthodox Hindu ideas about caste and gender. Tantric rituals may include impure substances or eroticism that defy Hindu notions of purity. Often, these teachings are presented as a

path to enlightenment that is faster than traditional Hinduism but also more dangerous. Anyone who attempts tantric rituals without being properly initiated may risk insanity or other misfortune. Such traditions have an ambivalent relationship with possession; while some texts warn of the considerable dangers of the entities known sometimes as “seizers” (*grahas*), other traditions and their texts encourage forms of possession considered to be spiritually beneficial. In these cases, possession may be harmful for those uninitiated yet beneficial for those appropriately prepared. While there are tantric traditions dedicated to the god Vishnu, and even Buddhist forms of tantra, Tantric Śaivism, the path dedicated to the Hindu god Śiva, has the richest tradition of possession and exorcism.

Possession as an affliction is described in early tantric texts. The eighth-century CE *Netra Tantra* and the eighth-to-ninth-century CE *Svacchandabhairava Tantra* describe the varieties of invisible entities that possess humans and the rituals of protection and exorcism that the devotee could use against them. The tradition is unusual because it specifies the “weak spot” of the person through which demonic entities gain access: The *Netra Tantra* speaks of a “hole” in the shadows of impure or ritually negligent men and women through which such entities enter. The texts provide an intricate demonology that includes multiple classes of male and female beings, differentiated partly by their motives in possessing people. Particular types of entities are within families (*kulas*) of beings headed by a deity. This demonology has a practical purpose. If the type of possessing entity is known, an initiate can conduct an appropriate offering to the deity that heads the entity’s *kula*. This offering also satisfies the entity and causes it to leave. Theologically, tantric Śaivism considered demons and demonesses to be actual emanations of the deity at the head of the family; “exorcism” in this context is sometimes more a matter of placating an extension of the possessing being than expelling it by force or by the grace of a separate god. However, forceful expulsion rituals are also described. Interestingly, possession was also linked to caste, in the sense that particular types of entity were held to possess people of particular castes and caste-inappropriate behavior was likewise held to be a symptom of possession.

Fear of possession is hardly unique to tantric Śaivite traditions, but the theology of deities and possessing entities grouped in *kula* hierarchies is a unique feature of these traditions. Even more unique is the idea of possession as a positive goal, which was present from an early point in Tantric Śaivism.

Earlier texts from the seventh to eighth centuries CE suggest that ascetics initiated into such cults deliberately sought possession by fierce goddesses considered to be aspects of Śakti, the feminine "power" of Śiva. Possession of this sort was sought in areas normally shunned precisely because of their perceived dangers of possession—in sparsely populated areas, at crossroads (a perennially haunted location in India and elsewhere), and, most shockingly for the uninitiated, cremation grounds. Conceived as "liberating possession," this practice would only have been undertaken by ascetics who had already renounced householder society. As a dangerous, potentially maddening practice, it was characteristic of the tantric promise of rapid spiritual advancement for those few able to withstand the rigors of the esoteric practices.

With the developments in Tantric Śaivite theology from the 11th and 12th centuries, a newer approach to possession as a spiritual goal developed. Prominent theologians within this tradition such as Abhinavagupta (mid-11th century to early 12th century) developed the refined concept of *samāveśa*, a form of possession in which the aspirant seeks a form of immersion in, or pervasion by, the impersonal power of Śiva. Enlightenment was achieving such a possession permanently—an "emptying out" of the individual personality in favor of the universal enlightened consciousness of Śiva. This was understood to be a difficult process, involving one or more of yoga practices, mantra recitation, meditation, or, in exceptional cases, a type of spontaneous enlightenment.

This development should be seen against the general background of the process described by Indologist Alexis Sanderson, in which originally marginal, ascetic, practices were adopted by Brahmin priests and "domesticated" by having dangerous or extreme elements reinterpreted as internalized, mental practices. Hence, possession changed in Tantric Śaivism to be an intensely intellectual process that respectable Brahmin householders could engage in, linked to complex textual traditions and mantras, when it was, earlier on, an ascetic practice conducted literally within cremation grounds, in which possession by potentially dangerous female entities was sought. Although possession in this later tradition was more of an immersion, a more literal sense of possession survived in the idea that gurus, whether currently living or already disembodied, could possess their disciples by entering their bodies in order to confer initiation and consequent spiritual advancement.

Tantra in the form of the Śaivite tantric traditions is thus characterized by a highly developed demonology and technology of exorcism, but also, in more limited and esoteric circles, by an idea of sacred possession, in which loss of individuality and individual control came to be seen as a means to enlightenment if they were sought under the right conditions.

Tristan Elby

See also: Buddhism; Hinduism

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TAYLOR, MICHAEL

In 1974, Michael Taylor, then aged 31, killed his wife Christine, 29, following an attempted exorcism. The case is notable for the role exorcism is considered to have played in causing temporary insanity and the subsequent controversy that led to more stringent guidelines on exorcism within the Church of England.

In 1974 Taylor joined a Christian fellowship group led by lay preacher Marie Robinson, then aged 22. They met several times at the Taylor's home in Ossett, West Yorkshire, with meetings involving speaking in tongues and the attempted exorcism of another individual. During the trial it was alleged by the prosecution that Taylor had become "involved in witchcraft," that he was afraid of the full moon and its influence on Robinson, and that one member of the group was a Satanist. Statements made by Taylor and Robinson indicated considerable sexual tension between them. Taylor interpreted his feelings for Robinson as "evil within me."

The relationship between Taylor and Robinson deteriorated to the stage where Robinson described Taylor as being ready to kill her. Taylor was taken to see Rev. Peter Vincent of Saint Thomas's Church, Gawber, Barnsley, in the diocese of Wake-field, and the conclusion was reached that Taylor was possessed.

At midnight on October 5, 1974, Vincent began the exorcism of Taylor, aided by Rev. Raymond Smith, a Methodist minister from Barnsley; their wives, Sally Vincent and Margaret Smith; lay preacher Donald James; and John Eggins. At times Taylor was physically restrained, and at one point a wooden cross he was wearing was taken and burnt. Crosses were forced into his mouth, and he was doused with holy water. The exorcists claimed to have cast out demons of blasphemy, bestiality, incest, lewdness, masochism, and many more. Exhausted by the ritual they sent Taylor home on the morning of October 6, although they believed that at least three demons of anger, violence, and murder still possessed him.

At around 10:00 a.m. Taylor assaulted his wife, tearing out her eyes, tongue, and much of her face. She died shortly afterwards. He was discovered wandering naked in the street, covered with blood, shouting, "It is the blood of Satan." Taylor later said both that he had been possessed by an evil spirit and that he believed he was ridding his wife of such a spirit.

Taylor was deemed legally and clinically sane and therefore fit to stand trial at Leeds Crown Court in March 1975. He pleaded not guilty to the charge of murdering his wife. According to expert witnesses he had been insane at the time the death occurred. The jury found him not guilty of murder by reason of insanity. Taylor was committed to Broadmoor Hospital, a high-security psychiatric facility in Crowthorne, Berkshire, for two years. He spent a further two years at Bradford Royal Infirmary, West Yorkshire.

After the trial, a second inquest into Christine Taylor's death was opened. Coroner Philip Gill recorded a verdict of misadventure, meaning that her death had been caused by accident rather than criminal action or negligence. Dr. Hugo Milne, then consultant psychiatrist to hospitals in the Bradford area, stated that hyper-ventilation during the exorcism had caused Taylor to "behave in an aggressive and uncontrolled way" that led to his wife's death. William Trethowan, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Birmingham, considered that Taylor experienced a "hysterical pseudopsychosis, which had been temporarily induced in him by his exorcisers."

Immediately following the death, the Bishop of Wakefield, Dr. Eric Treacy, MBE, banned exorcism in the diocese and established an investigative commission. However, he expressed confidence in Vincent and did not seek his resignation. Treacy denied that the exorcism had of itself led to the death.

Controversy over the role of exorcism continued throughout 1975. When challenged the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Donald Coggan, defended its use, but the Bishop of London, Dr. Gerald Ellison, followed Treacy by banning unauthorized exorcism. Exorcism was debated in Parliament, and 65 academics sent an open letter to the heads of the Church of England demanding a *de facto* ban. Coggan announced new guidelines for exorcism at the Church of England's General Synod. These stipulated that exorcism could only be conducted by experienced individuals authorized by the diocesan bishop, in collaboration with medical professionals, with minimal publicity, and followed by continuing pastoral care.

After being released, Taylor returned to live in Ossett. In 2005 he was arrested and charged with the sexual assault of a minor. He pleaded guilty and received a three-year community rehabilitation order including psychiatric treatment.

Leo Ruickbie

See also: Charismatic Movement; Johnson, Arne Cheyenne

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TELEVISION

Themes of spirit and demonic possession and related premises of spiritual or mental transference are common in fictional fantasy, horror, and science fiction television. Often, possession narratives are used to portray themes of paranoia and loss of identity. Horror anthology series, like *The Twilight Zone*

(1959–1964) and *Night Gallery* (1970–1973; both produced, with many episodes written, by Rod Serling) often featured stories based around spiritual transference. One notable *Twilight Zone* episode was “Dead Man’s Shoes,” written by Charles Beaumont, about a homeless man who finds a pair of shoes belonging to the victim of a mob hit. When the man puts them on, he is possessed by the murdered man’s spirit and driven to seek revenge. This episode was remade, to one degree or another, in both of the revivals of *The Twilight Zone*—first in the 1985 revival as “Dead Woman’s Shoes” (by Lynn Barker), in which a maid wears her murdered employer’s shoes and is possessed by the woman’s ghost, then in the 2002 revival as “Dead Man’s Eyes” (by Frederick Rappaport), in which a woman wears her murdered husband’s glasses and is affected by his consciousness. As is often the case in ghost stories, revenge or justice for an unsolved murder is a motivating factor.

Night Gallery featured three episodes revolving around spiritual possession: “Whisper” (David Rayfiel), about a woman who seeks out the spirits of the dead and invites them to possess her, “The Hand of Borgus Weems” (Alvin Spainsley), about a man who is being overtaken by an evil presence that begins by possessing his hand, and “The Housekeeper” (Matthew Howard), about a magician who attempts to replace the consciousness of his harridan wife with that of his kindly housekeeper. *Night Gallery*, like *The Twilight Zone*, was an anthology series and so had no overriding theology or cosmology maintained throughout its episodes, though ghosts, black magic, and Satanism were common themes.

Jared Padelecki and Jensen Ackles as Sam and Dean Winchester from the television show *Supernatural*. (The WB/Photofest)

Kolchak, the Night Stalker (1974–1975), often cited as an early inspiration for later ongoing supernatural fantasy/horror series, had two episodes centered around spiritual possession: "Firefall" (Bill S. Ballinger), in which the ghost of an arsonist attempts to possess a conductor who had interrupted the dead man's funeral procession, and "The Knightly Murders" (teleplay by Michael Kozoll and David Chase, story by Paul Magis-tretti), in which the ghost of a dead knight possesses a suit of armor in order to defend its ancestral home. *Kolchak, the Night Stalker* maintained some consistency from episode to episode, but its cosmology was notably syncretic: episodes lent equal credence to vampires, "voodoo" zombies, ghosts, witches, the Christian devil, and Hindu raksashas.

The X-Files (1993–2002) generally abandoned a consistent spiritual mythology in favor of its alien and science fiction mythology. While some episodes (such as "All Souls" (story by Billy Brown and Dan Angel, teleplay by Frank Spotnitz and John Shiban) were explicitly religious in nature, many were not. Episodes featuring possession included "Daemonicus" (Frank Spotnitz), "The Calusari" (Sarah Char-no), and "Grotesque" (Howard Gordon).

Fantasy and horror speculative fiction was carried through the 1990s with shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003) and *Angel* (1999–2004), which abandoned most pretenses of a religious origin for demonic entities. Many references were made to "demons," "souls," "Hell," and "gods," but no specific religion or religious basis for these ideas was ever used. Several episodes of these shows featured possession, including the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episodes "The Pack" (Matt Kiene and Joe Reinkemeyer), which featured the character Xander being possessed by the spirit of a hyena, and "The Dark Age" (Rob Des Hotel and Dean Batali), about a demon called Eyghon that could possess dead or unconscious bodies, and the *Angel* episode "I've Got You Under My Skin" (Jeanine Renshaw and David Greenwalt), which actually featured a demon *trapped* in the body of a soulless, sociopathic child. Additionally, there were ongoing themes of demonic possession. Vampires were described, sometimes inconsistently, as being possessed or partially possessed by a demonic entity. In *Angel*, the character Lindsey McDonald receives a hand transplant that results in an evil presence trying to take over his body hand-first.

Unlike many of its predecessors, the show *Supernatural* (2005–), about two young brothers who hunt demons, regularly featured exorcism and sought to create a consistent religious basis for its internal mythology. This mythology was similarly syncretic but also relied heavily on Judeo-Christian notions of demons, angels, and demonic possession. While demons were often portrayed as physical presences that had to be fought and destroyed or otherwise controlled, they were also shown as invading psychic presences, as in the episodes "Phantom Traveler" (Richard Hatem), "The Magnificent Seven" (Eric Kripke), and "Jus in Bello" (Sera Gramble).

Contemporary with *Supernatural* were a spate of horror and supernatural-themed television shows, including *The Secret Circle* (2011–2012), about a coven of young people who discover they are modern day witches, which introduced a running plot in its first season about the ghost of a deceased witch possessing numerous characters (as in the case of many other ghosts, this was largely for the purpose of vengeance). *The Vampire Diaries* (2009–), a show with a highly syncretic and largely irreligious mythology that featured vampires, werewolves, witches, witch hunters, ghosts, and inexplicable trans-generational twins, featured a plotline in which Emily Bennett, the ghost of a witch who died in the 19th century, possessed one of her descendants.

Stories in which a character has their mind replaced or invaded by

another intelligence—often either an alien presence, or another person's mind technologically imprinted or intruded—are also common to science fiction. In the *Star Trek* (1966– 1969) episode "Wolf in the Fold" (Robert Bloch), a seemingly demonic entity claiming to be Jack the Ripper (as well as several other notable murderers throughout history) infects the crew of the starship Enterprise. In "Turnabout Intruder" (story by Gene Roddenberry, teleplay by Arthur Singer), a scientist attempts to take control of the Enterprise by transferring her mind into the body of Captain Kirk.

Similar plots in which alien minds possess or induce the minds of other characters can be found in several of the other *Star Trek* series, including the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987–1994) episode "Sub Rosa" (teleplay by Brannon Braga, story by Jeri Taylor, based on material by Jeanna F. Gallo), the *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995–2001) episode "Cathexis" (teleplay by Brannon Braga, story by Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky), and the *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001–2005) episode "The Observer Effect" (Judith Reeves-Stevens and Garfield Reeves-Stevens). *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (1993–1996) featured two alien races, the Bajoran Prophets and the Pah-Wraiths, that were energy beings depicted repeatedly possessing the bodies of others. While most of these possession narratives did not result in characters behaving in antisocial or psychotic ways, running themes of paranoia about another's behavior were common.

Other science fiction shows that employed notions of possession include *Farscape* (1999–2003), which had a running plotline in which the main character, John Crichton, had a psychic "copy" of the antagonist Scorpius in his mind, which could communicate with him, influence his behavior, and seemed to be trying to take control of their shared body. The main antagonist in *Stargate: SG-1* (1997–2007), was a parasitic alien called the Goa'uld, which could infect a human host and take control of their mind. In the spin-off, *Stargate Universe* (2009–2011), characters used an alien technology to psychically transfer their minds across great distances so that they could communicate despite being separated by light years. The premise of *Dollhouse* (2009–2010), also created by Joss Whedon, revolved around humans who had been technologically altered to have blank minds that could be overwritten by artificial personas; in later episodes, the technology allowed the direct transfer of minds. Running themes in these particular possession narratives, often the case with a smaller ensemble cast, were notions of a loss of identity and loss of self or bodily control.

Chris Braak

See also: Film

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TEYYAM

Teyyam worship is particular to areas of the southern Indian state of Kerala, especially Malabar, and involves devotion to the regional deities known as *teyyams* in the Malayalam language of the area. Teyyam worshippers are Hindus, but the religious complex instantiated by Teyyam worship is a distinctly local form of Hinduism. It is a folk tradition that is broadly continuous with elements of Tamil religious culture (another localized form of Hinduism) that can be traced as far back as the earlier first millennium CE. Although all castes in Teyyam areas of Kerala are associated with the worship of *teyyams*, for the higher castes it tends to be complementary to the cult of pan-Indian Hindu deities, whereas for lower castes regional Teyyam deities tend to be central to religious practice. Possession in Teyyam worship is primarily a desirable state of affairs sought during the dance practices known as *teyyattam*, or "dancing the *teyyams*." However, Teyyam culture also recognizes that there are undesirable states of possession that need to be combated using time-honored rituals of exorcism and banishment.

Teyyam dancing occurs during festivals, and involves ritualized dances, the performance of which is both an act of devotion to the Teyyam deities, and an act of incarnating them through possession. Possession here is voluntary, induced by ritual action, and those possessed have the sanction of their community in being recognized as legitimate performers. Teyyam performers can either be hereditary priests attached to particular shrines or lower-caste professionals, also hereditary, who travel between shrines to perform at designated times of the year. Possession plays a role in the selection of priests; while heredity is a necessary condition for the priesthood, priests are selected only when they display spontaneous possession by the deities, which indicates divine favor for this role. Priests tend to be devoted to (and thus possessed by) a single deity, whereas professional performers have

the right to enact possession by a number of deities, which ones and in which shrines being determined by heredity. The existence of hereditary rights to be possessed by particular deities, somewhat strange from a Western perspective, points to the highly structured nature of devotional possession in Teyyam.

Teyyam dances have to be seen to be properly appreciated but tend to involve elaborate traditional costumes and ornamentation depicting the deities. Donning this costume is itself a ritual act and is a prelude to the onset of possession. The dances themselves are distinguished both by the erratic and sometimes violent movements made by the performers in the course of enacting possession by these entities and by the interaction such performers have with the audience, since it is not uncommon for them to careen, whirling and shrieking, into the crowds of onlookers. The potentially wrathful nature of the possessing deities is seen in the ritual weapons wielded by performers. Sometimes dances culminate with the dancer speaking with the voice of the deity, often in an oracular manner.

Possession often comes on during songs in praise of a particular deity. Once possessed, the dance sequences are not arbitrary or spontaneous but constitute a rehearsed and traditionally mandated performance. It may be appropriate to see the practice of possession in this way as achieving a heightened consciousness as opposed to a trance state, since performers do not enter the latter on the majority of occasions. For major celebrations dancers go through a period of fasting and isolation. Chanting *mantras* and developing mental concentration are also practiced as preparatory rituals. In both cases the *shakti*, or divine power, of the deity is sought, and this points to the presence of tantric elements within Teyyam religion. The structured nature of Teyyam possession raises inevitable questions of “authenticity” and the origins of such possession experiences. While experience of possession is certainly real for the performer, recent scholarly analysis of Teyyam ritual possession has tended to stress the cultural source of the individual experiences and behaviors involved. In this sense, it is a counterexample to explanations of possession seeking to locate it within individual psychology, and it is relevant to see possession here as something purposefully enacted rather than passively received.

Within the religious culture of Kerala, there are also beliefs in malicious entities against which rites of exorcism are required. Such entities have gender and gender preferences in the sense that they tend to possess members

of the opposite sex to them. Teyyam songs speak of *yakshis*, or female demons, tending to dwell in trees in order to seduce men, and of minor male deities who like to hide in the blossoms of flowers in order to possess women who happen to pick their blossom. Other malevolent entities considered to dwell in forests seek to feed on pregnant women's fetuses. In all cases, this unwanted possession can be removed using traditional rituals and *mantras*; structurally such possession resembles other global instances of malign possession.

Teyyam possession, although an event happening by the grace and power of the gods, is not an unexpected form of possession. It happens at traditionally mandated times, to traditionally mandated practitioners, and involves the pervasion of the practitioner by a predictable deity. Despite the unstructured appearance of some Teyyam dances to uninitiated onlookers, it is, overall, a highly controlled instance of religious possession.

Tristan Elby

See also: Hinduism; Psychological Interpretations; Sociological Interpretations

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TIBET

The Tibetan cultural landscape is filled with numerous kinds of gods and spirits. Like most other Buddhist cultures, many of these spirits are believed to occasionally possess individuals, either toward beneficent or malevolent ends. Since the eighth century CE, Tibetans have practiced Vajrayana Buddhism, a form of Mahayana Buddhism that emphasizes esoteric teachings or "Tantra." Tibet is also home to another religious tradition called Bön,

which considers itself the indigenous Tibetan religion. Buddhism and Bön have influenced one another for a millennium, and the forms of possession described below can be found in both traditions. Demon-taming and Tantric exorcism are an integral part of Tibetan religious practice for Buddhist and Bön communities, which equally use Tantric methods to subjugate spirits. These methods involve a Tantric adept taking on the identity of an enlightened divinity through intense visualization and yogic meditation and using the spiritual power gained through such exercises to subdue lower unenlightened beings. By contrast, positive instances of spirit possession concern deities that willingly descend into the body of an oracle and offer healing services or clairvoyant prophecies to those who entreat them. While there are many recorded instances of spirit possession and exorcism in the Tibetan historical record, such beliefs and practices lack a specific beginning or originator and likely extend back into the plateau's prehistory.

Tibet's pantheon is vast and complex, involving indigenous spirits, gods adopted from Indian Buddhism, and wrathful beings called Dharma protectors. There are several types of local deities in the Tibetan tradition, including red horsemen spirits called *tsen*, white royalty spirits called *gyelpo*, and dark demonic spirits called *mu*. Moreover, many other local divinities blended with imported Buddhist ones—*nöjin* represented the capricious *yakṣa*, *lu* became the serpentine *naga*, and *düd* were conflated with the Buddhist god of death, Māra and his demonic retinue. According to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, many of these regional spirits were subjugated and converted to Buddhism by the Tantric exorcist Padmasambhava in the eighth century. From then on they acted as Dharma protectors, deities who guarded the Buddhist teachings, monastic communities, and lineage holders. Over the last millennium other Tantric specialists became famous for their demon-taming abilities, and even more deities were added to regional mythologies and monastery shrines as protectors. However, there is a hierarchy even among these guardians, a division between mundane and transcendent deities that goes back to at least the eighth century.

Beyond such spirits there are also the ghosts of the recently deceased, and both can be responsible for possessing a person or casting a pall over a household. It is the untamed horde of local divinities and the restless dead that are generally responsible for unwelcome possessions. A person so afflicted will often exhibit chest or stomach pains, severe fatigue, paralysis, and heavy breathing. Sometimes the entity will speak through its host,

making demands or explaining their grievances. Demonic spirits often possess people through witch attacks or by being drawn to an individual, either because the latter inadvertently invaded their territory or destroyed a sacred object. Meanwhile, ghosts—which usually come about through a violent or unexpected death—will sometimes possess a living member of their family as an unintentionally harmful attempt to remain close to their kin. Whether a demon or a ghost, however, a person's life force is believed to be stolen or drained, and if an exorcism is not performed quickly enough the individual will die.

The exorcist requested to cure a spirit possession varies depending on the Tibetan community. In general Tibetan lamas (high monks or Tantric masters) are considered the most efficacious, and when requested to exorcise a spirit they do so by chanting sorcery texts meant to repel the evil influence. Lamas and monks may also be called upon to produce what is called a "ransom offering" that lures the spirit away. These offerings consist of handmade barley dough effigies, colorful thread crosses, and other dough clumps pressed into various shapes. The effigy is meant to look like the possessed person and often contains strands of their hair and discarded toenails, acting as a ritual simulacrum of the individual meant to draw the demon away from them. The thread crosses also acts as an offering, luring the spirit into a symbolic universe represented by the layers of thread and actualized through the monks' meditative visualizations. Along with the additional dough offerings, these items are meant to distract and entice the demon. When the ransom offering is complete the items are removed from the house, taking the demon with it. The ransom is then placed at the edge of town or at a crossroads to disorient the spirit so that it will not return. This rite is sometimes performed shortly after a death in the family to dissuade any negative forces from further afflicting the household. Ransom offerings are still performed in Tibetan communities today, and occasionally along the roads of Lhasa one can spy beer boxes of dough effigies and thread crosses placed in the middle of the street so that they can be run over by passing vehicles, dispersing troublesome spirits to the winds. In form and function this exorcism rite is similar to rituals practiced at monasteries when land must be cleansed of demonic interference before Tantric rites, sacred dances, and holiday celebrations are conducted.

While lamas are considered effective, other families or communities prefer the services of an oracle, either in lieu of a lama or if a lama's

exorcism has failed. Such oracles represent the beneficent side of spirit possession in Tibet. The origins of the oracle tradition are unknown, though it is generally accepted to have been a pre-Buddhist practice that was incorporated into the Buddhist cosmological structure. An oracle is a person who acts as the conduit for a specific deity, yet most mediums can channel multiple deities in a single trance session, with each spirit providing further insight into a personal crisis or prophetic declaration. A layperson or monk becomes the oracle of a deity either due to a special relationship with the deity, through a family or institutional lineage, or seemingly at random. When oracular possessions first begin, often in the medium's youth, the trance states they produce are erratic and painful to the possessed individual. A lama is brought in to diagnose the ailment—called "god sickness"—and he will then ritually open up the person's psychophysical "channels" in order to allow the deity to possess the body in a less harmful, more controlled fashion.

Once a possession is recognized and controlled, the deity descends into an oracle through a ritual ceremony that intentionally summons the spirit into the body, resulting in a trance state. While entranced the possessed individual shows a marked change in the behavior. The oracle will start to shake and tremble, breathe heavier and faster, and even puff out air or wag their tongue. The medium's complexion also changes, with his or her face turning red or yellow depending on the disposition of the deity. An oracle possessed by a wrathful deity will grow red-faced and become very violent in his or her movements. A passive deity will cause the medium to act more subdued. It is generally held that oracles of wrathful deities do not live very long because of the intense strain and pain they endure during trances. The medium will also start to exhibit the specific attributes of the particular deity possessing them. The oracle of a one-eyed deity will close one of their eyes; if the deity suffocated to death in a previous life, the oracle will make unsettling gurgling sounds; if a spirit was crippled in a former life, the oracle will walk with a limp.

More so than with local oracles, monastic and state oracle trances tend to be elaborate affairs. The attire worn by such oracles during a trance is laid out on a throne in the order in which they dress before the trance. The clothes in this ensemble are indicative of the possessing deity and include various weapons associated with them. Another important item that many oracles wear is a small shield around their neck with a *mantric* syllable inscribed on it. After the oracle is dressed, monks or attendants will begin a series of

chants inviting the deity to descend into the medium's body. This invocation can include musical accompaniment in tandem with detailed iconographic descriptions of the deity. As the chanting continues, the deity is said to descend gradually upon the oracle, forcing him or her to fall deeper into a trance state. This transition is illustrated by huffing breath and more violent movements. Assistants are available throughout the ceremony to help dress the oracle, hold him or her up, and catch them when they collapse at the end of the trance. When the assistants step back and the oracle bears their heavy helmet alone, the deity is believed to have fully descended.

For prophetic sessions, the oracle is praised and asked various questions by the surrounding monks or members of the community. The oracle's answers are usually cryptic and require a translation by the assistants. For healing sessions, the deity-endowed medium will converse with the spirit possessing the ailing person, discovering where they came from, whether they are a demon or ghost, and why they have afflicted the unlucky person. In the course of this talk, the invading spirit will often request certain objects or religious activities in exchange for its departure. More obdurate spirits will require threats, physically striking the afflicted, or calling on a lama or local shaman where the oracle failed. In some instances, trances are punctuated by the oracle performing wild frenzied dances and evincing superhuman abilities, such as twisting a sword into a knot, vomiting coins, and piercing their own skin without bleeding. These miraculous exhibitions help to authenticate the oracular event.

After the main ceremony, the oracle may provide an extra service of offering blessings either by blowing on seeds or inscribing prayers on tied ribbons, both of which are then offered to members of the audience or family as talismans. The service ends abruptly when the oracle collapses. The deity departs, the human faculties of the medium return, and sometimes he or she passes out. The medium has no recollection of the proceedings of the session. At the conclusion of the ceremony, thanksgiving prayers are usually recited.

The goal of oracle trances is to provide a service to the community on multiple levels. This service involves eliciting the supernatural knowledge and skill of the deity through the oracle in order to safeguard the future of the community. With village oracles the concern is more regional and focused on the health of local families and individuals, while state mediums like the Nechung Oracle offer clairvoyant advice on a greater political scale, speaking to the national or global interests of Tibetans. An oracle can be consulted by

individual patrons regarding personal crises, such as matters of wealth, health, and love, or for communal concerns, such as unsolved crimes and legal issues. It is on the local level that oracles tend to act more as healers, using their powers of divination to assess an illness and responding with the appropriate remedy. When oracles are involved in exorcisms, they perform a ritual called “releasing the obstructing spirit,” where they will beat a sick individual with his or her sword or other type of blessed object in order to drive away the pernicious demon causing the illness. In such instances, a desired spirit possession is used to repel an undesired possession, turning the bodies of the medium and the ailing person into sites of spiritual conflict.

Oracles are still present in Tibet today, though their numbers have severely diminished since China’s Cultural Revolution. These mediums are mostly only village oracles, with all state and major monastic oracles having been banned by the Chinese government. However, instances of oracular trances, spirit possession, and exorcism have still been observed in modern times. Moreover, there is a contemporary situation where exorcism and oracle possession have overlapped in Tibetan communities both in and outside Tibet. There is a controversial Tibetan Buddhist Dharma protector named Dorjé Shugden who is believed to be a demon by most Tibetan Buddhists, including the Dalai Lama, while a vocal and growing minority considers him a Buddha. A few Shugden oracles are still active, and they are entreated for prophetic advice by the deity’s devotees and major leaders of this tradition. By contrast, copies of an incantation meant to exorcise the deity are posted at monasteries in Lhasa and recited during ritual ceremonies in Dharamsala, animosity toward Shugden having become especially pronounced since the 1970s. This discrepancy leads to conflicting circumstances where exorcisms are performed against the deity by some communities, while he is propitiated through oracles by others. This disparity has reached a global level over the last several decades with the growing popularity of Tibetan Buddhism in general, and with the increase of Shugden worship in particular. The major proponent of the latter is the New Kadampa Tradition, which has its base in the UK but has founded centers elsewhere in Europe as well as the United States, Canada, Brazil, and Hong Kong.

Tibetan Buddhism came down from the roof of the world in the last century and rapidly took on a worldwide presence. With this expansion, Tibetan beliefs in spirit possession and exorcistic practices have come with it and are engaging with the world at large. New communities of predominantly

Western converts to Tibetan Buddhism are encountering these beliefs and influencing the expanding dialogue on their validity, utility, and propriety. Yet these practices are still found on the Tibetan plateau despite restrictions implemented by the Chinese government. Spirit possessions, oracular trances, and exorcism rites continue to be an integral part of Tibetan culture both inside Tibet and in exile.

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See also: Buddhism; Chod; Nechung Oracle; Tantra

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Related Primary Document: Shugden Exorcism (Tibetan Buddhist, 17th Century)

The following text is a brief exorcistic exhortation in two stanzas that is directed at the controversial Tibetan deity Dorje Shugden. Single-folio copies of this recitation have been found pasted on shrine windows at several temples in Lhasa, Tibet. In these instances they act as protective spells. The second stanza was composed by the Fifth Dalai Lama and can be found in text 58 of his collection of rituals entitled the Spontaneous Achievement of the Four Activities. However, the first stanza is not found in the Fifth Dalai Lama's writings—at least it does not precede the second stanza as presented in his ritual collection. In contrast to the Lhasa permutation, the second stanza and its original preceding line are recited at the reestablished Nechung Monastery in Dharamsala, where it acts as an addendum to the monastery's core liturgy. In this instance too the recitation is meant to ward

off the spirit, if not exorcise him out right. While Dorje Shugden is not explicitly named, his previous human incarnation, Drakpa Gyentsen (1619–1656), is. The samaya *vow the text claims he lacks refers to the tantric vow a disciple adopts when taking esoteric initiation under a lama. The vow signifies the bond between master and pupil, and corrupting or falsifying it is a very grave offense.*

May the righteous Three Jewels annihilate the corporeal and incorporeal forces of darkness that scorn the Buddha's teachings with perverted aspirations, as well as all manner of evil thoughts and actions!

The one without a [true] *samaya* vow—with a false *samaya* vow—is called Drakpa Gyentsen. If this ghost, this *samaya*-corrupter with perverted aspirations, harms the [Buddha's] teachings and all sentient beings, do not give him refuge or act as his comrade-in-arms. [Rather,] grind him into dust!

Introduction and translation by Christopher Bell

TOBIT, BOOK OF

The book of Tobit, a work found in Catholic and Orthodox biblical canons but not in the Protestant Old Testament or the Jewish Tanakh, is noteworthy for the presence of both angels and demons in the story. While the events depicted in Tobit are set in the period of the Assyrian captivity of ancient Israel, the book itself was likely written somewhere outside the land of Israel in the mid-third to early second century BCE and can be considered a historical fiction. Fragments of Tobit discovered at Qumran suggest that the book was originally written in a Semitic language, but complete copies exist only in Greek manuscripts. Tobit shares similarities with the family stories from the book of Genesis, various prophetic books, and the books of Daniel and Job. Themes in the book of Tobit include the importance of marrying other Israelites, the problem of suffering, concerns with right living outside the land of Israel, and the idea that angels and demons affect daily human life.

The story centers around two afflicted characters: Tobit, a pious Israelite who goes blind despite his many good deeds, and his relative Sarah, who is afflicted by a jealous demon named Asmodeus. The book opens with Tobit outlining how he was taken captive to Nineveh but remained faithful to Jewish laws, especially by continuing to bury the Israelite dead according to

Israelite customs despite the disapproval of King Sennacherib of Nineveh (1:16–18). After burying the body of a murdered Israelite during the feast of Pentecost, Tobit falls asleep in a courtyard with his face uncovered, and some sparrow droppings fall into his eyes, causing him to go blind (2:4–10). Tobit subsequently laments to God and prays for death (3:1–6). The book then switches to the story of Sarah, a relative of Tobit who lives in Media. The text reports that Sarah had been married to seven different husbands, but that the demon Asmodeus kills each of the men on their wedding night before the marriage can be consummated (3:8). Like Tobit, Sarah prays for death (3:10–15). God hears the prayers of both Tobit and Sarah and sends the angel Raphael to heal them (3:16–17). Meanwhile, Tobit gives instructions to his son Tobias on how to live piously after his death—including a request that Tobias marry—while also recalling that he left some money in trust in Media (4:1–21). Tobias promises to do all his father instructs him and sets off for Media to collect the money; the angel Raphael, whose name means "God Heals" in Hebrew, pretends to be a human relative named Azariah and accompanies Tobias (5:1–22).

On the way, Tobias and Raphael camp by the Tigris River, where a large fish tries to swallow Tobias's foot as he bathes (6:1–3). Raphael instructs Tobias to catch the fish and to keep the heart, gall, and liver (6:4–5). When Tobias asks about this, the angel explains that burning the fish's heart and liver in the presence of an individual afflicted by a spirit or demon will cause that demon to flee, while the gall will heal eyes afflicted with white films (6:7–9). When they approach Media, Raphael encourages Tobias to stay the night at the house of Sarah's father, while also revealing that Tobias is next in line to marry her according to the endogamous laws of ancient Israel (6:10–13). When Tobias objects, worrying over the fate of Sarah's previous husbands and about what will happen to his parents when he dies, Raphael explains how Tobias can defeat the demon (6:16–18). After the marriage, Tobias successfully expels the demon by following Raphael's instructions: the demon smells the odor of the burning fish parts and flees to the remotest parts of Egypt, where the archangel Raphael binds him (7:1–8:3). Many scholars suggest that behind the rather comical account of Tobias exorcising the demon may be reflections of exorcism rites known to Jews living outside the land of Israel at the time of the composition of the book. Additionally, the use of "binding" from Tobit 8:3 is a known technical term for weakening demons found in other ancient texts (see 1 En. 10:4; Matt. 22:13). After

recovering Tobit's money, the newlyweds return to Nineveh, where Tobias cures Tobit using the gall of the fish (8:19–11:14). Raphael then discloses his angelic identity, and Tobit gives final instructions to Tobias (12:1–14:11). Following the death of Tobit and Anna, Tobias and Sarah return to her parents in Media; the book closes by reporting how Tobias dies as a respected old man, praising God after hearing about the destruction of Nineveh and Assyria (14:12–15).

The book of Tobit highlights the continuing development in Israelite thought about angels and demons—the latter of which are absent from the canonical texts of the Tanakh/Old Testament. In particular, Tobit presents a world where the demonic realm can cause suffering in the lives of otherwise innocent individuals. It also includes the fullest depiction of Raphael, who does not otherwise appear in the canonical texts of the Tanakh/Protestant Old Testament. His presence throughout the book of Tobit stresses the idea that God intervenes and acts in the lives of righteous humans through the angelic realm. In later Jewish and Christian thought, Raphael is considered an archangel; he stands in the presence of God and communicates human prayers to the deity (see Rev. 1:4; 1 En. 20). The demon Asmodeus, the meaning of whose name is uncertain but may be connected to older Persian sources, continues to appear in other apocryphal books (see 1 En. 6–11; T. Sol. 2:3) and may be behind the story in Mk. 12:18–25. In later Jewish tradition, Asmodeus—called Ashmedai—appears in various rabbinic texts and is often referred to as the "prince of demons." However, he is not always seen as purely wicked and according to tradition helps to build Solomon's Temple (see *b. Git*. 68a–b; *Num. R*. 11:3).

Kelly J. Murphy

See also: Judaism

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TREPANATION

Trepanation, or “trephination,” refers to the practice of drilling or scraping a hole into the human skull. There are four distinguishable methods of trepanation: grooving, scraping, drilling, and cutting. The instruments and techniques used and the reasons for this practice have varied over time and place. There is evidence of trepanation in nearly every European country, Africa, South America, North America, Asia, and the Middle East. Although trepanation can be documented all over the world, there is little agreement as to why trepanation was performed. There are proponents for both biological/medical and cultural or religious reasons (also referred in the literature as magico-ritual or magico-therapeutic reasons). In at least some cases, trepanation was done to release demons or spirits thought to live inside the skull.

Aside from the removal of spirits, other cultural theories of trepanation include the collection of ritual objects. M. A. Ruffer, regarded as the founder of paleopathology, theorized that post-mortem trepanation was done to produce bone disks (known as roundels) to be worn as ornaments or charms. Ruffer also described a belief that powdered cranial bones had curative powers, which lasted throughout the Middle Ages. Another case study describes a skull from Medieval England that had three unhealed holes that were likely used to suspend the skull as part of a ritual.

An article by T. Wilson Parry (1914) describes a man from the late 19th century who was suffering from severe head pain and believed there was a demon inside of him. He was trepanned and during the procedure admitted that he felt no pain, which those involved interpreted as a sign that he was possessed by a demon. It is unknown if the surgery relieved his pain, but the case shows that even as late as the 19th century people believed that trepanation could cure possession.

More often, skeletal remains provide the only clue as to why trepanation was performed. When skeletal remains are found, recovered, and examined, one of the first things that archaeologists note is whether there is trauma and/or any kind of biological reaction to a disease on any of the bones. Although there are relatively few documented cases of trepanation, the more recent case studies include quite a lot of information from which archaeologists can evaluate the sex, age at death, signs of trauma, and any

indication of a disease that may have affected the individual long enough to become evident on the bone.

It is easy to associate trepanation with a biological or medical reason in cases where there is trauma and/or evidence of disease on the bones. Theories that trepanation was performed for magico-therapeutic reasons are more difficult to prove using only skeletal evidence. In a case concerning an 11- or 12-year-old juvenile from ancient Iran (1100–800 BCE) there is neither trauma nor biological evidence to suggest a reason for trepanation. Archaeologists concluded that, given the age of the individual, the trepanation may have been part of a ritual or religious ceremony. In this case, it was assumed that the reason for the trepanation was not magico-therapeutic because there was no evidence of disease.

This debate is complicated by a problem known as the "osteological paradox." Very sick individuals would have died quickly before the disease could leave evidence on their bones. Paradoxically, bones that show signs of disease reflect relatively healthy individuals who survived long enough for the disease to mark their bones. This means it is difficult to conclusively prove that an individual did not suffer from disease prior to trepanation. Therefore, in cases with only skeletal evidence, the reasons for trepanation usually remain speculative.

Lara Frame Newell

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UFOLOGY

Since the rise of UFOlogy in the 1950s, alleged "contactees" have claimed to have met with extraterrestrial beings or to have been abducted by them. Some contactees claim to "channel" extraterrestrial personalities or to communicate with them telepathically and have even formed religious movements around these messages. The beliefs of these contactees closely resemble traditions of spirit possession found in other cultures.

The UFO phenomenon is generally regarded as beginning on June 24, 1947, when Kenneth Arnold allegedly saw nine unidentified flying objects while flying over Mount Rainier, Washington. Arnold described the objects as flat and moving "like a saucer," leading newspapers to coin the term "flying saucers." As the UFO phenomenon grew exponentially, one of the first individuals to capitalize on the Arnold sightings was George Adamski (1891–1965). Although Adamski claimed to have encountered, and even photographed, UFOs prior to Arnold, the popularity of Arnold's account drew attention to Adamski's alleged encounters with extraterrestrials. These encounters included several UFO sightings, alien visitations, and even a tour of outer space in 1952, accompanied by a Venusian extraterrestrial named Ortho. In Adamski's accounts, he communicated with this extraterrestrial through telepathy, setting an early precedent for claims of extra-sensory contact between humans and extraterrestrials.

Also during the 1950s, the Aetherius Society, founded by Englishman George King (1919–1997) claimed to channel messages and spiritual energies from a host of celestial beings. King claimed to have been chosen as the channel of the "Interplanetary Parliament" that would instruct Earthlings on defense strategies against dangerous cosmic forces. As a medium of transmission for these messages and energies, his body is said to have undergone spiritual possession through physical trance—at times altering his intonation and behavior.

Like the Aetherius Society, the Unarians, a UFO religion founded by Ernest Norman (1904–1971) and Ruth Norman (1900–1993), based their tenets on communications from extraterrestrials they referred to as "Space

Brothers.” Ruth Norman, who became the leader of the Unarian movement after Ernest’s death, believed she was the Archangel Uriel and had the power to speak with these aliens. In addition to channeling messages from the Space Brothers, Norman also preached the use of past-life therapy, in which followers would enter trance states and re-enact elaborate performances of their former selves.

Professor George Adamski stands in front of a painting by Gay Betts depicting the Venusian space pilot he allegedly met in the Mojave Desert, California, November 20, 1952. (Mary Evans Picture Library/Alamy)

The International Raëlian Movement is a contemporary UFO religion. Members (called Raëlians) believe that life on Earth is actually an extraterrestrial creation, evidenced by a host of historical records found among texts, ancient teachings, prominent religious figures, and extraordinary architectural feats. Founder and leader of this movement, Claude Vorilhon, or Raël as he is better known, teaches that humans are both creations and descendants of these extraterrestrials. According to Raël, these tenets were conveyed to him in 1973 through a personal encounter with an extraterrestrial named *Yaweh*, in which Raël boarded this being’s spaceship and received lessons demystifying the teachings of the Bible.

In addition to claims of personal encounters with aliens, there are also broader religious beliefs that involve a much more collective notion of spirit possession by aliens. During the formative years of The Heaven's Gate new religious movement, founder and leader Marshall Applewhite (1931–1997) preached that human bodies were merely physical vessels occupied by extraterrestrials. Applewhite described this concept as one's soul receiving a "walk-in" from an extraterrestrial.

Not all traditions regard alien possession as positive. Lafayette Ronald Hubbard (1911–1986), former science fiction writer and founder of the Church of Scientology, wrote about spirit possession as part of his early theological doctrines that established the church. According to Hugh Urban's research, Hubbard's writings describe how some 75 million years ago, an alien dictator of the "Intergalactic Confederacy" named Xenu brought humans to Earth from other planets. These humans were then paralyzed and housed in military bases at the feet of volcanoes, which were later bombed by Xenu, disseminating the dismembered bodies and souls—known as *Thetans*—throughout Earth. These *Thetans* were then captured, forced to view propaganda films, and indoctrinated with a host of misleading information about various topics, including world religions. Following Hubbard's account, these confused *Thetans* wander the Earth, becoming embedded in humans and possessing all of their faculties. These *Thetans* can manifest in any number of forms from physical and mental ailments that prevent humans from developing their spiritual potential.

Although UFOlogy is not as popular as during the Cold War, contactees continue to produce claims of mental or spiritual contact with extraterrestrials. These traditions can be regarded as a reimagining of spirit possession in which the superhuman forces that deliver wisdom through human oracles are technological rather than supernatural.

Salvador Jimenez Murguia

See also: Channeling; New Age Movement

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UMBANDA

Umbanda is a Brazilian new religious movement in which various types of powerful and helpful spirits (highly evolved over many reincarnations) are believed to possess mediums: "guides" help the living with their spiritual evolution, and "guardians" keep dangerous forces at bay. Rituals begin with prayer; the spirits then incarnate in the mediums, usually accompanied by drumming; then clients— generally not members of the religion—come forward to consult with the spirits. About 400,000 Brazilians (0.3% of the population) self-identified as umbandists in the 2010 census. The religion is found throughout Brazil; it has spread to neighboring countries, especially Uruguay and Argentina; and groups are present in many other parts of the world as a result of Brazilian emigration. Umbanda is a significant provider of spiritual therapeutic services, with millions of people consulting regularly with the spirits.

Umbanda originated in the 1920s as a mixture of Candomblé (a Brazilianized West-African/Yoruba tradition) and Kardecism (transplanted French Spiritism). On the one hand, many people (including new European emigrants) were attracted to Candomblé but found its rituals too exuberant. On the other hand, indigenous and black spirits were rejected as "unevolved" when they began to appear in kardecist séances. Umbanda emerged as an often more ritually constrained forum in which these spirits are especially respected.

Umbanda continues to reflect these tensions. There is enormous internal variation in beliefs and practices, including a spectrum of ritual forms, ranging from candomblé-like *terreiros* (grounds) to kardecism-like "White Umbanda" *centros* (centers). Umbanda has influenced or mixed with various Afro-Brazilian religions (e.g., Jurema, Tambor de Mina, and Candomblé-de-caboclo) and with some new religious movements (e.g., Santo Daime and Vale do Amanhecer). Forms of "Esoteric Umbanda" have emerged that draw on New Age and esoteric currents.

The many spirits of Umbanda are generally organized into seven "lines"

(the names and characteristics of these vary). Umbanda recognizes only spirits of the dead. (Some see the "*orishas*" as highly evolved spirits that have never incarnated, distinct from the divinized ancestors in Yoruba traditions like Candomblé.) Experienced mediums work with several spirits, often one from each of the seven lines. In general, the sometimes dozens of mediums in a given ritual session all work with the same type of spirit: for example, *caboclos* (indigenous or indigenous/caucasian spirits), *pretos velhos* (old black ex-slaves), *crianças* (children), *marinheiros* (sailors), *boiadeiros* (cowboys), and *ciganos* (gypsies). With few exceptions, these spirits are both male and female, with the gender of spirit and medium corresponding. Regional variants of Umbanda emphasize different spirits, and new types occasionally emerge: for example, "mechanics" have begun to incarnate in mediums in the city of Recife. Types of spirits can be recognized by characteristic gestures, postures, vocalizations and tones of voice, as well as their preference for different ritual objects (e.g., capes, straw cigarettes, cigars, alcohol, or small stools made from tree trunks). Mediums generally remain semi-conscious as the spirits incarnate, aware and remembering the experience afterwards, but with the spirit in full control.

Spirits mainly perform three related functions in Umbanda. First, they give "assistance" to the clients who are called up from the seating area for semi-private one-on-one conversations in the primary ritual space. These conversations go in various directions: for example, recognition of mediumistic talent (often the first step toward becoming an umbandist medium); divination; advice about one's spiritual path, job, or relationships; psychological counseling; the assignment of rituals to purify the home or assist in healing; or the diagnosis of ailments. Second, the spirits are believed to perform physical or spiritual healings. Some *centros* have a sort of spiritual emergency ward, where clients diagnosed by a spirit as having serious ailments are taken for treatment that can range from chanted prayers and the manipulation of "magnetic fluids" by moving hands above the body to aroma or crystal therapy (in some centers of white and esoteric Umbanda). Third, certain types of spirits are especially good at protecting clients from, or undoing the effects of, black magic, that is, spells or "works" that are believed responsible for causing problems in people's lives. Quimbanda, sometimes considered the mirror image of Umbanda, is a related religion that works with this "left side." Many of the spirits that are central there as agents of black magic sometimes appear in Umbanda as protectors against it: for

example, *Exus* (morally ambivalent guardian spirits), *Pomba giras* (female counterparts to the *Exus*), and *Zé Pilintras* (an infamous type of rogue or scoundrel spirit).

Steven Engler

See also: Afro-Atlantic Religions; Brazil; Kardecism

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V

VIETNAM

Spirit possession is an integral part of the Vietnamese religious landscape. The idea that a ghost, spirit, or god can enter into the human mind/body is found among many of Vietnam's 54 different ethnic groups. Partly because it is so widespread, spirit possession takes several forms. Possession may be solicited or unsolicited, an individual or group endeavor, and spirits can either bestow benefits or inflict harm upon their subjects. Spirit possession may be practiced as part of a larger religious tradition or not. Regardless, it is important to note that Vietnam is known for religious syncretism, meaning that individuals often draw upon the beliefs and practices of multiple religious traditions.

Unsolicited spirit possession occurs when the spirit of a god or goddess, spirit, or ghost enters into humans without invitation. Historians, novelists, and social scientists have documented such possession for hundreds of years noting the harm, usually in the form of illness, that needy or malevolent spirits inflict. During the French colonial era some Viêt said village epidemics were caused by bands of harmful spirits that joined forces to swoop over a village. Often times spirits of people who have violent deaths, unfulfilled desires (thirst or hunger, for example), or those who have no one to light incense or care for them in the afterlife cause harm to living humans. Such spirits remain near the place where they died. A living person might accidentally and unknowingly bump into the spirit simply by walking down the street where a person died or by wading into a river where someone had drowned. In the streets of contemporary Vietnam certain trees are decorated with sticks of incense—they are offerings to people who died on that street. It is hoped the incense will appease the spirits and prevent them from harming the living. Sometimes spirits help humans by bestowing them with special gifts. If one suddenly gains the ability to play a musical instrument without practice or prior knowledge, for example, it could be the work of spirits.

Some Viêt encourage possession by requesting spirits, gods, or ghosts to enter human minds/bodies. Shamans, soul callers, and spirit mediums are experts in these solicited possessions. "Ghost callers" enter into trance in

order to communicate with spirits of the dead, and many contemporary Vie.t families seek their help in locating the remains of war dead. Shamans enter similar trance states for clients as a means of identifying and communicating with bothersome spirits.

Beliefs and practices of spirit possession are most often associated with local religious traditions and Daoism but are also held by practitioners of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Catholicism, even when the beliefs are formally rejected by doctrines of those religions. It is not uncommon for Viêt to seek treatment for spirit possession, for example, while simultaneously saying they are not supposed to believe in such practices. Although such behavior might appear disingenuous to outsiders, the ability to move with ease between different traditions is a characteristic of Viêt culture. Whereas shamans and soul callers have individual practices, other kinds of spirit possession occur only within the context of spirit possession religions.

The Mother Goddess Religion (Đạo Mẫu) is a spirit possession religion found throughout Vietnam and among overseas Vietnamese. Individuals destined to follow the religion have unusual dreams or visions of specific spirits in the Mother Goddess pantheon. Each hierarchically ranked spirit has a name and personality and is associated with a particular color, clothing, song, and dance. After men and women become spirit mediums, they hold annual or biannual ceremonies during which they honor and serve the spirits of goddesses, mandarins, ladies, princes, and princesses by inviting those spirits to enter their minds and bodies. While possessing mediums the spirits dance, listen to songs, communicate with the audience through verbal speech or nonverbal gestures, and distribute blessed gifts in the form of fruit, flowers, or packaged food. In most regions of Vietnam only one medium enters trance, but in some areas several mediums are possessed during a single ceremony. Attending a possession ceremony of the Mother Goddess Religion is an auspicious event for spirit mediums and their followers. A similar and somewhat related spirit possession religion honors the spirit of Trần Hưng Đạo, a Vietnamese general who successfully fought against Mongol invaders in the 13th century. His followers allow themselves to be possessed by the general as well as members of his family. During trance they sometimes cut their tongues letting the blood drip onto small bits of paper. The blood spatter patterns carry important messages for recipients of the papers.

Although spirit possession has a long history throughout Vietnam, its

practitioners have sometimes been condemned or persecuted. The Mother Goddess Religion, for example, was banned in northern Vietnam between 1954 and 1986. Many Viêt nonetheless secretly continued to practice their rituals, and when the ban was lifted, the Mother Goddess Religion and other forms of spirit possession flourished. Today evidence of spirit possession is found in nearly every village and street corner of Vietnam as it has inspired art and literature, the construction of temples, the crafting of ritual goods such as incense, statues, and offerings, and is even celebrated or performed in national festivals.

Karen Fjelstad

See also: Buddhism; Catholicism; Daoism

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WAGNER, C. PETER

C. Peter Wagner (1930–) is an ordained minister, missiologist, teacher, and prolific writer. He is associated with the Christian neocharismatic or "third wave" charismatic movement that came to prominence during the 1980s. During the 1990s, Wagner became a leader in a charismatic movement called the New Apostolic Reformation. He has been a founding member or leader of multiple evangelical Christian missionary organizations. He is best known for his writings on spiritual warfare.

Wagner began his career in 1956 as a missionary in Bolivia. From 1971 through 2001, he served as a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission. During the early 1980s, Wagner experienced a charismatic conversion after observing that the most successful missionary groups in South America were Pentecostal groups, which were manifesting miraculous spiritual gifts such as healing the sick and casting out demons. Since his charismatic conversion, Wagner has taught that for Christians to embrace the model for church growth presented in the New Testament Book of Acts, they must embrace "supernatural manifestations" of the Spirit like the early Christian apostles did.

Like many charismatic Christians, Wagner believes that humans can fall under the influence of evil spirits, which can cause physical illness, psychological illness, and sinful behavior. Wagner argues that in order for a Christian to have the spiritual power to cast out demons, he or she must be living a holy life and maintain an intimate relationship with God. For Wagner, individual and group prayer are central to the task of waging spiritual warfare.

Wagner's teachings about territorial spirits and strategic-level spiritual warfare are more controversial. According to Wagner, territorial spirits are powerful demons at a high level in the demonic hierarchy who dominate certain groups of people. These groups of people are often the members of a town or nation that a Christian missionary is trying to evangelize. Wagner identifies the "principalities and powers" of Ephesians 6:10–18 and the "prince of Persia" and "prince of Greece" of Daniel 10:10–21 as territorial

spirits. A territorial spirit wreaks havoc in its given territory by causing social degradation, evident in high levels of crime and vice. The spirit also keeps the people in its territory from accepting the Christian gospel. In order to successfully missionize areas dominated by territorial spirits, Wagner argues that missionaries must engage in strategic-level spiritual warfare. This is the third and highest level of spiritual warfare. Below it are ground-level spiritual warfare (casting demons out of individuals) and occult-level spiritual warfare (confronting demons released by occult and "New Age" practices).

Wagner teaches two primary methods of engaging in strategic-level spiritual warfare: spiritual mapping and identificational repentance. Spiritual mapping involves a combination of conventional research and prayer. A group researches a region's political and cultural history while praying for guidance in order to reveal what sort of corporate sin or other circumstance might be allowing the region's territorial spirit to maintain control. For example, a South American town might be dominated by a demon because some of the residents worship a pre-Christian deity. Once spiritual mapping is completed, a group of evangelists can offer focused prayers to combat the ruling demon. For example, missionaries might identify a local pre-Christian deity as the territorial spirit and bind it through prayer.

Identificational repentance involves convincing residents of a given region to repent for a corporate sin the people of the region have committed. For example, a group of residents in a South American town might be urged to ask God to forgive the town for worshipping a pre-Christian deity even if the ones praying never worshipped the deity themselves. This action is believed to weaken the grip of a territorial spirit over a region.

Daniel Wise

See also: Charismatic Movement; Deliverance Ministry

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WARREN, ED AND LORRAINE

Ed and Lorraine Warren, researchers in parapsychology, demonology, and the occult, first rose to prominence in American popular culture in the 1970s. Beginning in obscurity as they conducted research from their home base in Connecticut, it was their investigation into a murder allegedly connected to a haunted house in Long Island in 1975 that propelled them into the public eye. Their claims about evil supernatural experiences were described in the book *The Amityville Horror: A True Story* by Jay Anson in 1977 and later adapted into a horror film in 1979 (subsequently remade in 2005). This led to research into thousands of cases, several becoming high profile, in a career spanning several decades.

Both of the Warrens were born in Connecticut. Edward Warren Miney was born on September 7, 1926, in Bridgeport, and his wife Lorraine Rita Warren on January 31, 1927, in Monroe. Ed claimed to have experienced paranormal phenomena growing up, and that one of the houses he and his family lived in when he was young was haunted. At the age of 16 Ed met Lorraine while he worked at a movie theater. They married the following year before he left to serve in the Navy during World War II. After the war Ed worked as a police officer, and was also an artist who sold paintings. But it was the ghosts, haunted houses, and other aspects of the paranormal that continued to hold Ed's interest. In 1952 the Warrens founded the New England Society for Psychic Research where they both served as directors. Ed worked as a demonologist while Lorraine claims to have psychic abilities as a trance medium, which she used to assist Ed in their collaborative research. They also assembled the Warrens' Occult Museum located in their home in Monroe, which includes a number of items collected during their research that are said to be associated with the occult and the demonic.

Over the course of 50 years of research, the Warrens claim to have investigated over 10,000 cases. Some were exceptionally significant for their careers as they were adapted into books and films. Their best-known case unfolded in 1977, as the Warrens were the first to investigate claims of the

Amityville haunting of George and Kathy Lutz. Prior to the Lutz's purchasing their home, six members of the DeFeo Family were murdered there. This was said to be the source of experiences with a demonic presence that harassed and eventually forced the Lutzes from their home.

Another case involved the Snedeker family, who claimed that dark supernatural events, including manifestations of ghosts and terrifying visions, took place in a rented home in Southington, Connecticut, in 1986. Ray Garton described these events in his book *In a Dark Place: The Story of a True Haunting* (1992). The Warrens discovered that the home had previously been used as a mortuary, and suspecting past necrophilia, they believed that it was infested with demons. This story was adapted into the film *The Haunting in Connecticut* in 2009.

Most recently, one of the Warren's cases became the focus of the film *The Conjuring* in 2013, and the couple was featured prominently as characters in the story. In addition, Lorraine served as consultant to director James Wan. The case involved events from 1971 when Roger and Carolyn Perron claimed to experience haunting and other paranormal events in their colonial farmhouse in Harrisville, Rhode Island. This film features Annabelle, one of the more notorious items housed in the Warrens' Occult Museum. Anabelle is a Raggedy Ann doll that a woman purchased in 1970 and later claimed was associated with paranormal activity. The Warrens believed the doll was used by a demonic spirit to manipulate human beings. At the conclusion of the case the Warrens took the doll into their possession to protect the woman and her family, and it remains under lock and key in a glass case in the Warrens' museum.

Ed and Lorraine Warren at Danbury Superior Court, 1981, where a grand jury returned an indictment against Arne Cheyenne Johnson in the slaying of Alan Bono, 40, in 1981, in Connecticut. Lorraine Warren was one of the persons to talk with the 19-year-old man after the slaying that his attorney says was the work of the devil. (Bettmann/Corbis)

The Warrens considered themselves experts in demonology. They were self-taught and described their work as both religious and Scientific. The religious foundation for their work was a mixture of a variety of elements. Roman Catholic demonology and exorcism were especially significant. When anthropologist Michael Cuneo interviewed the Warrens, they described working as “exorcist brokers” who could connect people with “underground” Catholic priests willing do unauthorized exorcisms. Other important elements included Protestant fundamentalist spiritual warfare theology and deliverance ministry, elements from the paranormal, and “the occult” that often perpetuated stereotypes and conflations of witchcraft and Satanism. Their work arose in the 1970s with American popular culture’s interest in the paranormal and the demonic, and they helped pave the way for contemporary interest in these subjects, as well as horror films based upon these ideas. Ed died on August 23, 2006, but Lorraine continues the work. Although she is not as active as in previous years, she leads tours in their occult museum, serves as a consultant for films, gives public interviews, and appears in paranormal reality shows.

John W. Morehead

See also: *Amityville Horror, The*; Johnson, Arne Cheyenne; Perron, Roger and Carolyn; Ramsey, Bill; Smurl Haunting

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WATSEKA WONDER (MARY LURANCY VENNUM)

In 1878, 14-year-old Mary Lurancy Vennum of Watseka, Illinois, claimed to be Mary Roff, a neighbor's daughter who had died nearly 13 years before. The story became famous as psychologists and scientists investigating the claims of Spiritualism debated the nature of Vennum's condition. The physician and spiritualist E. Winchester Stevens dubbed the case "The Watseka Wonder." In 1981, the story was adapted into the play *Before I Wake* by William Westbrooks, who is Vennum's great-great grandson.

On July 11, 1877, Vennum, or "Rancy," as her family called her, began to experience fainting spells, sometimes losing consciousness for hours. She also complained of hearing voices at night. After fainting, she would describe visions of heaven and angels as well as seeing her two departed younger siblings, Laurie and Bertie. By November she was also experiencing convulsions, reportedly bending backwards so that her head nearly touched her feet. Her family assumed she was mentally ill and began to search for a mental asylum that would take in Vennum.

Asa B. Roff and his wife were Spiritualists and believed that Vennum might be not be mentally ill. They persuaded the family to contact E. Winchester Stevens. When Stevens spoke to Vennum on January 31, she began to exhibit multiple personalities, including an old woman named Katrina Hogan and a young man named Willie Canning. Stevens interrogated these personas until Vennum became herself again and explained that other spirits were using her body while her own spirit was in heaven. Stevens

suggested that if her body must be controlled by spirits, that she invite a good spirit to enter her. Vennum then announced that she would invite the spirit of Asa Roff's daughter, Mary. The following morning, Vennum announced that she was Mary Roff. She appeared not to recognize her own family and said she longed to return to the Roff household to see her parents and siblings. Vennum was taken to the Roffs where, as Mary, she embraced the family and showered them with kisses. She lived with the Roffs, acting as their departed daughter. According to witnesses, she appeared to know everything about Mary and the Roff household, despite having little contact with them. This lasted until May 21, when she became Vennum again and returned to her family. Soon after, Vennum's strange behavior ceased, and she married and had children. Stevens wrote that when Vennum gave birth, Mary's spirit possessed her again to facilitate a painless delivery.

Significantly, Mary Roff had also experienced fits and trances before her death in 1865. Her family attempted multiple therapies for her condition, including "water cure" therapy and placing leeches on her temples. Mary reportedly developed an obsession with blood. Her fits were sometimes violent, and on one occasion she cut her arm open with a knife. She was also said to have clairvoyant abilities during her trances. Physicians, clergy, and journalists would visit the Roff home where Mary would read while wearing a blindfold and perform similar feats of clairvoyance.

Stevens was convinced that Vennum was genuinely possessed by Mary Roff and published an article about the case in the September 1879 issue of *The Religio-Philosophical Journal*, a Spiritualist journal. The article sold 50,000 copies. He also wrote a book entitled *The Watseka Wonder* that was published posthumously in 1887. Richard Hodgson of the Society for Psychical Research interviewed Vennum about her experiences and also endorsed the story as a genuine case of possession. Hodgson's colleague, the psychologist William James, was impressed by the case and noted it in his book *The Principles of Psychology*.

Those who believed Vennum was possessed were persuaded by the way she appeared to know things that only Mary could know. Philosophy professor Frederick Dommeyer suggested that Vennum's possession was a delusion but that her uncanny knowledge of Mary's life actually came from a misunderstood psychic ability. However, psychologist Frank Sargent Hoffman claimed there was nothing extraordinary about Vennum's knowledge of Mary and dismissed the Watseka Wonder as a case of

"hysterical impersonation." Hoffman noted that Vennum could have easily learned about Mary Roff and the Roff household because Mary had been a minor celebrity and the two families had briefly been neighbors. Hoffman further suggested that Vennum may have been imitating Hoff's fits and trances either deliberately or unconsciously.

Joseph P. Laycock

See also: Dissociative Identity Disorder; Psychological Interpretations; Spiritualism

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WICKLAND, CARL

Carl Wickland (1861–1945) was a Swedish-born American psychiatrist and psychical researcher. He believed that some forms of mental illness were caused by disembodied spirits who become attracted to and inhabit sensitive individuals, leading to often insensible or extreme symptoms and behaviors.

Wickland was born in Liden, Sweden, on February 14, 1861. In 1880 he moved to America and arrived in Saint Paul, Minnesota in 1881. He met and married the woman who was to become his partner in practice and love of his life, Anna, in 1896. That same year they moved to Chicago for Carl to pursue a career in medicine. Wickland received his medical degree from Durham Medical College in 1900, and after practicing general medicine for a few years, he developed a specialization in abnormal psychology. In 1909 he was appointed chief psychiatrist at the National Psychopathic Institute of Chicago but eventually left that position in 1918 to found his own research center in Los Angeles, the National Psychological Institute.

During his early years of research, Wickland formulated a hypothesis that the cause of insanity was not inborn in the individual experiencing psychotic

or neurotic symptoms; rather it is discarnate spirits, trapped between two worlds and confused by their passing, who latch on to certain individuals and cause them to do things that are out of character or even harmful to themselves or others. Wick-land developed a process to dislodge these "obsessing" spirits that involved a combination of technology and popular notions of spirit communication. He created an electrical generator called a Wimhurst machine that provided a mild shock to the patient experiencing unwanted symptoms, so as to give the obsessing spirit a jolt out of the patient's body. The spirit would then be guided into the body of a ready and waiting psychic medium, whereby the doctor could then communicate and reason with the spirit, explaining to it how it came to its current state and encouraging said spirit to pass over to the other side. Carl's wife Anna was his muse and medium in this process of spirit expulsion and played an integral role in the treatment of Wickland's patients.

Wickland reported scores of patients finding relief and a positive prognosis from this method of catharsis in his two books *Thirty Years Among the Dead* (1924) and *The Gateway of Understanding* (1934). At the time of Wickland's explorations into psycho-spiritual possession and exorcism, the line between medical and spiritual healing was not nearly as defined as it is today, and many of his contemporaries engaged in similar research. Indeed, in the almost 70 years after Wickland's death on November 13, 1945, he is still remembered and referred to today for his contribution to the fields of psychology and spirituality.

Natalie R. Dollar

See also: Psychological Interpretations; Spiritualism

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WINDIGO

The *windigo* is a cannibalistic monster described in the folklore of North American Algonquian traditions. "*Windigo*" is an Ojibwa word, but the creature is also known in related languages as *wihtiko* (Western Cree),

Chenoo (Mi'kmaq), and *Atoosh* (Eastern Cree and Montagnais). In addition to myths about *windigos*, there are also accounts of humans either transforming into these creatures or becoming possessed by a *windigo* spirit and engaging in cannibalism. *Windigo* stories—both legendary and historical—have been transmitted across Algonquian-speaking generations since before the arrival of Europeans, with the earliest transcriptions appearing in the *Jesuit Relations* in the 1630s.

Windigo is the antithesis of traditional Algonquian values. Adapted to in an unpredictable and sometimes harsh environment, Algonquian cultures are grounded in a deep sense of dependence on other humans as well as animals and spirits. Survival, especially in moments of subsistence crisis, depends on the cultivation of personal competence and virtue. Above all one had to maintain good interpersonal relations as well as self-control and lucidity. The *windigo* embodies the evil and madness that arises when such competence is found wanting.

The northern Cree story of "Nanusk's Stone" begins, "Some say that people who are cannibals [*windigos*] go mad, others that they go thoroughly wicked." The *windigo* is no mere cannibal, though cannibalism is its best-known trait. Descriptions of its monstrous features include a heart of ice and a lipless face, but they vary somewhat from one tradition and story to the next. Invariably, however, the *windigo* explains madness, wickedness, or both. Most traditions distinguish between an original and more powerful *windigo* that was never human and *windigos* that ceased to be human when they were possessed or transformed. Other traditions suggest that all *windigos* were once human. The monster's ambiguous nature reflects a sense that the problems of evil and insanity are a mystery beyond full human comprehension.

"Nanusk's Stone" is a historical account of the lone survivor among a northern Cree family believed to have starved to death one winter in the mid-1800s. Soon after the spring melt, furs appeared one morning on a large red stone, visible across the river from the region's main fur-trade settlement. The disappearance of Nanusk and his family had already been attributed to starvation, but now suspicions arose that someone may have survived by resorting to cannibalism. Nanusk's evident reluctance to enter the community was an ominous sign. The furs were nevertheless replaced with supplies, an impersonal exchange that continued until Nanusk tried to attack a woman out fishing. The attack confirmed that Nanusk had indeed become (possessed by)

a *windigo*. He was hunted down and killed, only after being shot and stabbed many times. His body was burnt, but his heart— which was surrounded by ice—would not burn, and so it was buried next to the red stone, known thereafter as Nanusk's Stone.

As this story suggests, killing a person suspected of *wihtiko* possession or transformation is usually a last resort, only when it is clear the affected person cannot be cured or poses an immediate threat. There are numerous legends depicting titanic struggles with giant *windigos*, but these mythical tales are grounded in personal encounters with the problems of evil and insanity. Most *windigo* incidents, as Martin Teicher and Regina Flannery point out, transpire within families rather than larger communities. "Almost a Wetiko," for example, tells of a family of five Cree who were faced with starvation in the mid-1800s. The father and son had been out looking for food, and when they did not return, the mother and her two daughters left camp in search of them. Suddenly, amidst the slow, silent, painful pace of their exhausted movements on the trail, the mother cried out: "Now we'll be able to eat. Here's a young bull moose!" Immediately, with tears in their eyes and tremors in their hands, the two daughters shook their mother: "Mother, don't say that," one of them urged. "That's my brother!" The mother came back to reality, and they slowly passed the frozen body—too weak to do more—and eventually found help at an Anglican mission.

Another story from the same era is told of an old woman who turned *windigo*, killed, and ate a large number of people over many years. One of her earliest victims was a young bride, convinced one summer by the manipulative woman to abandon her husband and accompany her to a winter camp. Once on route, the older woman deprived the younger one of food, weakening her before she killed and ate her. Others fell victim in similar ways, or so the stories say. In this exceptional case, the woman escaped punishment and died of old age. Another story tells of a man who was forced to eat the flesh of his dead children to survive, but when he met others, he did not withdraw or become anxious; rather, he told them the painful story of what he had to do to survive. No suspicion lingered over his head. Still another story tells of an alleged *windigo* who, in moments of lucidity, cried inconsolably, fearing he had killed and eaten his wife and children. Others, fearing they were about to become possessed by a *windigo*, have allegedly asked to be killed; many more have been cured or watched.

These stories reveal the most important traits of the *windigo* to be

delusion or manipulative dishonesty; a withdrawal, manipulation, or destruction of relationships; and a loss of self-control or emphasis on manipulating others. In short, there is a loss of unity between experience, understanding, and action. Instead of striving to know things as they are, live accordingly, and learn from experience—all in relationship to others—the *windigo* constructs an understanding of reality that justifies its actions—most often a desperate attempt at survival—and manipulates or censors its experience accordingly.

Windigo behavior might be a case of nonculpable madness or culpable monstrosity, but for cultures that interpreted deviant behavior with reference to supernatural and personal forces, this monster explained both. The stories, therefore, contain an ambivalence regarding transformation or possession. Becoming a *windigo* implies greater responsibility while becoming possessed by a *windigo* implies less responsibility. The first identifies the loss of humanity and the transformation into a monster. The second identifies a humanity that is overtaken by an external monster and led into monstrous deeds, but remains redeemable or curable. Redemption or cure—by various methods—focuses on the recovery of lucidity, self-control, and relationship. As a last resort, redemption may only come at the cost of death, but it is a death that frees the possessed person and destroys the *windigo*.

Cecil Chabot

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Related Primary Document: Nanusk's Stone (Cree Indian, 19th Century)

The story of Nanusk's Stone, as transcribed here, is part of compilation entitled: "Told by the Indian: Myths, Stories & Legends of the Cree and Ojibway Indians." These stories were collected by an unnamed eye doctor who was in Canada sometime between 1956 and 1966. These were the years when the narrators, Samuel Iserhoff and Willie Frenchman, were living in Moose Factory, where the eye doctor recorded this story. A typescript copy of this compilation ended up in an obscure file, archived among the papers of botanist and ethnologist, Jacques Rousseau, who conducted research in the 1940s among the Cree of northern Quebec.

Willie Frenchman—whose mother tongue, despite his name, was Cree—was born in Moose Factory, Ontario, in 1882 and died there in 1971. Rev. Canon Samuel Iserhoff was born in Waswanipi, Quebec, in 1885. His parents both spoke English and Cree. He worked for the Hudson's Bay Company most of his life, and met his wife Sarah (born in Waskaganish in 1895) while working at Eastmain. They moved from there to Neawsqwayskow, Nemaska, Fort George and back to Eastmain, and then to Old Factory. It was during their time there, in the early 1950s, that he was made a Canon in the Anglican Church. In 1956, on account of his declining health, they moved to Moose Factory, where he passed away in 1966.

Nanusk's Stone

This is a story which I pieced together from Canon Iserhof [sic], and my friend the Indian, Willy Frenchman. This is a true story which happened about seventy years ago. It has happened before, that when men are hungry they turn cannibals, and this was the case with people who got lost in the bush. Some say that people who are cannibals go mad, others that they go thoroughly wicked.

A little before this time a family of Indians from Moose Factory disappeared in the bush. Then a series of extraordinary events occurred. Firstly on the bank of the river, to the … [east[1]] of Moose Factory, there is a large stone and on this someone hung furs. The Hudson Bay Company heard of these furs, which increased from day to day, so they took them and laid stores of sugar, tea, etc., on the stone in return payment. These would disappear and more furs would appear, and the rumour spread that these were left by a person so wicked that he daren't meet his fellow men. The people

remembered the family who had disappeared, and they reckoned that one had eaten the others, and was afraid to be seen by men as he knew that the penalty was death. Or perhaps he had become mad. He could not live without certain foods, and he trapped his animals and laid the furs on the stone hoping for an exchange of goods.

One day when the men were collecting the furs to take in to the Hudson Bay Company, they heard a voice saying, “Tell the Boss [HBC trader or *okimaw*] to send shot and powder.” They were very startled, but could see no one. On the next occasion that they went to fetch the furs the same thing happened again, and they then told the Hudson Bay Manager, who, however, decided to leave well enough alone. Then a nasty incident occurred. An Indian woman went up the river in a canoe, fishing. She landed, and was standing on the shore fishing, when she felt uneasy. She looked around and saw a strange figure watching her with a hatchet in his hand. She sprang for her canoe, and the man sprang after her, but luckily slipped on the sand and fell. She pushed off from the shore, for it was plain that the man had meant to kill her. She arrived back at Moose Factory in a state of terror; then the people began to talk, they remembered the stories of those who had never returned from solitary hunts, and the rumour ran round the village that there was a cannibal abroad. The children were kept from straying on the river bank, and the wives implored their men not to hunt alone in this region. Finally the news came to the ears of the Hudson Bay Manager. He decided that something must be done, and he laid his plans accordingly. He took a large canoe in which four men with rifles crouched in the bottom, whilst he sat openly with an Indian paddling the canoe. In his hands he held two bags of sand, and he had told the men that he would try and reason with this man; if he was mad they must restrain him, but if really bad and dangerous they must shoot him. When they came near the shore and the stone, he stood up in the canoe holding a bag of sand in each hand shouting, “Nanusk (which was the name of the lost family) here is your shot and powder, come and get them.” After he had shouted several times, when the canoe was at the water’s edge, a voice was heard saying, “Put them on the stone.”

“Come and get them,” said the Hudson Bay Manager, “Or I will take them back with me.” There was a silence and he waited, then cautiously, stepping round the tree trunk, the unkempt figure of a ragged, gaunt man appeared. His matted hair hung on his shoulders, he had a long straggly grey beard, his eyes were bloodshot and protruding, foam flecked the edges of his

mouth, and the only clothes he had were the remains of ragged buckskin trousers. He stepped forward cautiously, stopped and then said, “There are men hiding in the boat, I will come no further.”

“Come on,” said the Hudson Bay Manager, and stepped on shore holding up the bags. The man’s eyes glistened with desire, and he wet his lips with his tongue, but slowly, cautiously with his eyes on the boat, he began to step back into the bush. The Hudson Bay Manager gave a signal to the men waiting in the boat, who also had a couple of dogs with them, and they sprang ashore. Then, this is what Willy told me, they shot him many times in the head and body, but he ran on pressing bits of leaves into his wounds. The dogs ran after, clawing bits out of him, but still he ran on, although he should have been dead many times over. Finally he fell to the ground, and they finished him off with their knives, but he took a long time to die. By now they were convinced he was really wicked, and therefore he must not be buried, otherwise he would come to life again. So they burnt him, and even then his heart would not burn, and, “Do you know why?” said Willy, “It was because it was surrounded by ice.”

And there the Nanusk stone stands to this day, and the people are afraid to go near it for they buried Nanusk’s evil heart near the stone.

Introduction and annotation by Cecil Chabot

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Division des Archives de l’Université Laval, Fonds Jacques Rousseau, P174/D3, folder 51—“Mythes, histoires et légendes des indiens Cris et Ojibways.”

[1] The original text says “west,” but this is almost certainly a mistake of transcription. A version of this story told to me by Nellie Faries, refers to a stone on the southeast bank of the Moose River, east of the island. For the first 18 years of my life, I lived in Moose Factory, directly across the river from this stone, which I heard many times referred to as Nanusk’s Stone.

X

XENOGLOSSY

The term “xenoglossy” is derived from the Greek roots *xenos*, meaning “foreign” and *glossa*, meaning “tongue” or “language.” Xenoglossy describes the practice of speaking a foreign, or unlearned language attributed to the possession or influence of a spirit or deity. It is not to be confused with glossolalia or speaking in tongues as practiced in Charismatic Christianity. To qualify as xenoglossy, the subject must speak an identifiable foreign language that was previously unknown or unstudied. In cases of alleged demonic possession, such as that of Ronald E. Hunkeler in 1949, the possessed sometimes speaks in ecclesiastical languages such as Latin. There is debate whether such instances are true xenoglossy or if the subject could have learned foreign phrases naturally.

Some scholars claim Acts 2 in the New Testament as evidence of the beginning of xenoglossy in Christianity. Acts records the Holy Spirit coming upon the early Christians at Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus Christ causing them to “speak in other tongues” (Acts 2:4). This appears to be xenoglossy; however Acts later reports that the witnesses of this phenomenon each heard the speech in their own language (2:5–12). This fact has led some biblical scholars to suggest that the text does not present the Christians as speaking the languages of those present (xenoglossy) but rather as speaking in tongues (glossolalia) with the Holy Spirit enabling those present to each hear the speech as if it were their own language. Scholars are thus divided over whether Acts 2 represents glossolalia or xenoglossy. Though there are examples in history of Christians such as the French Camisard and the Convulsionaries of Saint Medard claiming to learn to speak a language flawlessly without formal study under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, medieval Catholicism officially identified xenoglossy as evidence of demonic possession. The Ursuline nuns of Loudun, for example, reported speaking Turkish, Spanish, Latin, Greek, and a Native American language under the influence of demonic spirits. Xenoglossy is also claimed as a miracle in Islam when a non-Arabic speaker is able to perfectly recite the Qur’an in Arabic by the gift of Allah.

Accounts of xenoglossy rose in frequency with the rise of Modern Spiritualism. Judge John W. Edmonds reports in a letter dated October 27, 1857, that his daughter Laura Edmonds, who is commonly identified as the first medium of Modern Spiritualism, conversed with a native Greek speaker in his language by the assistance of a spirit. Numerous reports of the phenomenon in early Modern Spiritualism are recorded in Emma Hardinge Britten's 1870 book *Modern American Spiritualism*.

Xenoglossia has also been reported outside of religious and spiritual circles. The *New York Evening Post* printed a report on November 10, 1930, of a four-year-old girl in Warsaw who spoke a seemingly unintelligible language until it was identified as Gaelic. A more recent account is Czech speedway rider Matej Kus who suffered head trauma during a crash in September of 2007 leaving him unconscious for 45 minutes. Although he previously only knew a few broken phrases in English, he awoke exhibiting amnesia and speaking fluent English with the paramedics with a reportedly perfect English accent. His use of English diminished shortly thereafter when his memory began to return.

One of the earlier Scientific investigations of xenoglossy was the 1931 Rosemary case in which a young English girl claimed to be influenced by Pharaoh Amenhotep III's wife Telika-Ventiu who lived nearly 3,000 years earlier. The girl reportedly spoke 5,000 documented phrases in what was claimed to be the ancient Egyptian language. Egyptologist Mr. Hulme studied recordings of nearly 800 phrases, concluding that she spoke ancient Egyptian as it would have sounded. Subsequent studies, however, challenged Hulme's optimistic analysis, accusing him of manipulating the evidence. Though some have explained xenoglossy as a phenomenon of the subconscious memory, most scientific investigations have concluded that accounts of xenoglossy are exaggerated or misrepresented. Linguists and psychologists, therefore, generally do not recognize the phenomenon.

Some of the strongest documentation of xenoglossy in recent years emerges from the work of University of Virginia paranormal researcher Ian Stevenson who attributes cases of the phenomenon to either possession or reincarnation. Stevenson differentiates between recitative xenoglossy, in which the subject pronounces foreign phrases as if from memory without necessarily understanding what is being spoken, and responsive xenoglossy, in which the subject can intelligently converse with a native speaker. Stevenson's methodology and conclusions, however, have been subject to

criticisms leaving some researchers unconvinced. The evidence for xenoglossy, therefore, is primarily limited to anecdotal evidence with little insight offered by Scientific investigations at this time.

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See also: Glossolalia; Hunkeler, Ronald E.; Pentecostalism

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Z

ZAR

Zar is a spirit possession cult found across East and North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Iran. Participants in this female-dominated cult are said to be possessed by *zar*, or spirits, that cause illnesses and life difficulties. Sufferers of this possession illness seek relief through ceremonies during which the spirits are invited to "descend," or take temporary possession of participants' bodies. These all-night events are characterized by loud drumming, music, costumes, and animal sacrifices. If propitiated in this way, *zar* spirits are said to stop disturbing their human hosts during everyday life. The cult, while found largely in Muslim populations, is generally disapproved of by Muslim religious leaders.

Evidence suggests that *zar* originated in Ethiopia before the early 19th century, possibly as a result of cultural contact between Oromo and Abyssinian peoples. Contemporary *zar* also exhibits influences from other ecstatic possession cults in Sahelian Africa, particularly Nigerian Bori cults. From Ethiopia, *zar* spread out to Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, facilitated by the Ottoman Turkish domination of Egypt. Originally transmitted by slaves, by the 1880s the cult was well established as far away as Mecca.

In today's cults, *zar* spirits—usually considered a species of *jinn*—rarely afflict unmarried girls, children, or men. Thus, most practitioners of *zar* are married women, usually illiterate inhabitants of poor or rural communities. *Zar* are said to crave sensual pleasures associated with women, including wearing perfume and attractive fabrics. The spirits also value and take special interest in women's reproductive capabilities, particularly in rural contexts. In Sudan, where *zar* has been extensively studied, women are uniquely vulnerable to spirit possession during periods of life transition or challenge. Thus, women who have recently been married, given birth, been divorced, or lost a child are prone to possession; such traumatic experiences or major life transitions provide a kind of "opening" for the spirits to gain access to the human host.

Once possessed, women may suffer from any of a variety of ailments, from inability to eat or sleep to depression, difficulty conceiving, or general

bad luck. If a woman begins exhibiting such symptoms, a local *zar* cult leader —called a *shaykha* or *umiyya* in Sudan—typically carries out a ceremony to determine whether the cause is a *zar* and, if so, which particular *zar* is the culprit. If the diagnosis is positive, the possessed woman will have to placate the *zar* though a ceremony with many structural and thematic similarities to a wedding, during which she will go into a trance and allow the spirit to act through her body and express itself. After this initiation ceremony, the host will always be possessed by the spirit, but in a more controlled fashion that does not seriously interfere with her daily life. She will also be obligated to participate regularly in the local *zar* cult.

Zar musicians and healers perform their ritual in Cairo, 2006. The Zar ceremony, which uses drumming and dancing to cure an illness thought to be caused by a demon, is most prominent in southern Egypt and is practiced further south into the Sudan, though in fact it may be found anywhere in Egypt. (Khaled Desouki/AFP/Getty Images)

There are numerous classes of *zar* spirits, and women may be possessed by any or more than one of these spirits. Sudanese *zar* spirits—called *rih ahmar*, or "red winds"—might be deceased Sufi saints, Ethiopian prostitutes, or representatives of other exotic human groups. A prominent class of *zar*

comprises colonial officials and Western professionals, including doctors and bureaucrats; when possessed by such spirits during *zar* ceremonies, entranced women may perform stereotypical, exaggerated actions such as walking with a European cane or brandishing a stethoscope. Similarly, normally demure women possessed by a prostitute *zar* may dance lasciviously or make overtly sexual comments. Thus, possessed *zar* practitioners often behave in ways that would be unacceptable in regular life.

Zar's growth in popularity has accompanied the expansion of fundamentalist Islam in North African and Middle Eastern societies. Because of this, some writers have argued that *zar* is a subversive tool that Muslim women use to protest men's growing domination. For instance, women with spirit sickness usually ask their husbands or male relatives to pay for *zar* ceremonies. Despite official Muslim disapproval of the cult, most men agree to bear these costs; thus, possessed women gain a measure of control over their husbands. However, other scholars have claimed that, rather than subverting the dominant order, *zar*'s cathartic release for oppressed women actually enables the patriarchal society to continue. Still others argue instead that women use their experiences of the *zar* to construct meaningful life narratives by experimenting with alternate identities. Regardless of political interpretations, *zar* practitioners consider themselves good Muslims and rarely think of themselves as subversive, and typically believe interactions with *zar* spirits to be a legitimate part of Islam.

Today, *zar* is most common in Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia, although it is also practiced throughout the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. Its forms are highly diverse, with each *shaykha*'s group maintaining unique traditions and attitudes. Despite having been outlawed in several countries by hardline Muslim governments, *zar* appears to be growing, including now among urban and more privileged classes. Indeed, several nations now treat *zar* as an official traditional heritage and stage *zar* performances for tourist audiences. For the women who practice *zar*, however, their cult is still an essential part of daily life, and an important point of contact with the spirit world.

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See also: Ethiopia; Gender; Islam; Jinn

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